

CINEMA

incorporating television

Papers

Jack Thompson
in
The Club

Film Awards

Bob Ellis

Actors

Controversy

Hard Knocks

Starting this issue

New Television

Section

see centre pages

New Zealand





“Film suits the big event because film itself is a big event.”

*Shooting on film somehow shapes your thinking about the event.

I'm as influenced as any member of the audience by the scope of film. And, somehow, deserve it or not, film has acquired the reputation that it is larger than life. It's not considered as 35 mm, it's how it ends up—fifty feet wide on a theatre screen.

If you're shooting a commercial for T.V. you still have to think in that same big dimension because so many scripts call for that grand appearance on a T.V. screen.

When you're really serious about a production you shoot on film, because there are some things you just cannot shoot electronically. Tradition has a lot to do with it, although I think it is more to do with the mental limitation of the director—not the mediums.

As for Eastman color film that has to be the big event of films.”

Peter Cellier
Freelance Commercial Director.



Kodak Motion Picture Film
KODAK (Australia) PTY. LTD.

"The funny part about it" says Roger Cowland "the good opticals are the ones you don't see."

Where did you start, Roger, and how do you come to be supervising the feature opticals department at Colorfilm?

It goes back 20 years to George Harphries, London. I started there at the neg cutting department, and doing all sorts of jobs, learning all the laboratory procedures. Then I went to Canada, Toronto, at Film House in charge of quality control. After a year in Canada, I came to Australia to work on the *They Maroon* series that was being made out here. Unfortunately, he died on the first week of the series. So because there wasn't a lot of cutting work about then, I aberrated between cutting and opticals, gradually moving into opticals full time. Then I came to Colorfilm.

The year in Canada must have been interesting. They have a very high standard there.

They have extremely high. We did mostly commercial, they weren't doing a lot of feature then. We used to do a lot of release prints of features for the States, it was cheaper for them.

Let's talk about opticals work. Could you briefly explain the process?

There are two areas in Colorfilm's opticals department, makeup and printing. Makeup is the actual translation of the effects required onto a print. To do that, the makeup operator must be able to visualize the effects the editor has in mind. When we get the cut work print, the edge numbers are recorded and sent to the neg department, and the negative is extracted from the original camera rolls. It's quick, and sent back to us. Each scene is matched to the cut work print, and cued according to the required optical. That is all laid out on a makeup timing sheet, which sets out in frames the desired effect and how long it should run for. That run sheet

then goes down to the printer. That is a slow process - you're printing a frame at a time, and when you've got multiple exposures, you've got to keep going back over the same print of film. If you're a frame out, the history, and the job as a good

So all the opticals are printed in the optical department. Do you have special printers?

As a matter of fact, we've just installed another new one, an Oaklery. It's an aerial stage machine with two projector heads, one mounted behind the other so you can run negatives in one and your hi-conc master or takes in the other. This makes it a lot easier for re-positioning, re-mounting of the other image, re-positioning a take, or just enlarging or shrinking. It's got automatic zoom, skip framing, takes, dissolves, things like that.

If I bring a film into Colorfilm, what can I expect optically?

Given the right material to start with, there's nothing we can't do. If it's properly prepared, that's terribly important, preparation. One of the things I try to get clients to do is come in and talk the opticals over before they get into expensive shooting, and find out when they've shot it the effect they want isn't going to work.

Would rather people come in and talked about opticals as a way out?

Yes. In few cases people have come in and talked about things, and of course they work, because we know what they want, and they know how to help us get it for them.

Can you give us an example?

Well, Harphries was one, although it didn't go from pre-production stages, they asked me to go down to Melbourne where they were cutting to discuss the opticals

There were a few opticals they wanted and they weren't quite sure if they'd work. So I saw the whole film cut down then, which is a good thing. I got a feel for the film. Which is important for matching the opticals to the mood. Anyway, there's some pieces in Harphries where they looked at the edited work print, and decided some scenes needed masters which didn't have masters. We had to superimpose these, and it worked very well. We added a streaky sunset sky and storm clouds over the house.

I didn't notice it.

No. The good opticals are the ones you don't see. There are about 70 in Harphries, and quite a lot in Newfrontier, which most people wouldn't notice. Then there was the client who wanted a special optical for a commercial. They wanted two guys - one on each side of the frame - facing each other, waving at each other and shaking. They talked about it before they shot it, we discussed how they should shoot it. They brought it in, great, the effect worked. If you can get people to shoot things with the opticals in mind, it works better. You know if they have an effect, like a double exposure in mind, they work better if they're shot correctly, like a night shot superimposed over a day shot just won't work.

How else can an editor help get the opticals he wants?

By clearly marking work prints. One very common mistake made is that they don't check their time. They want a dissolve, and we find there's not enough material to cover it. I think a lot of editors leave things out on the cut work print that they should put down. For example fades and dissolves, they just mark them up and assume you'll understand what it is. For titles, choosing a good legible lettering style. This is very important because depending on backgrounds they can break up and be lost. I can only say pick a bold style.

Avoid serif?

Yes! Night shots tend to be the worst for titles to be over.

Can you see any radical changes in the business of opticals in the future?

Well, a lot of things have gone over to videotape, especially commercials, mainly because of the speed. But I think the advent of the CRI has made a difference - with opticals being turned round quicker. I still think you can't beat film for quality.

Do you like film?

Do I like film? You can say that again. I've always liked film, that's why I'm working here. That's another important thing I feel it's possible for anyone to work at something they really love doing, that's great. I think that when you put your best into it.

Do you have a favourite film?

"2001." I'm a science fiction fan.

An optical man's dream or nightmare?

Dream. I'd love to do something like that.

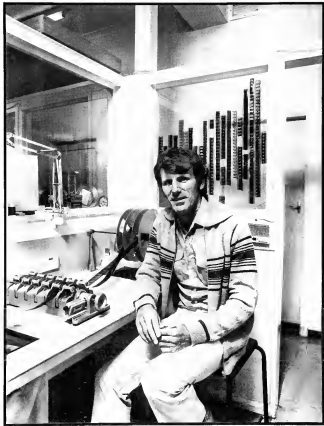
What makes Colorfilm a special job?

The people. They place a lot of importance on skilled technicians. And they look after their staff. It makes for a lot happier working area, people are more interested in and care more about what they're doing. I think it's terribly important for a producer to feel that he's in safe hands, that his film is going to be looked after as an individual thing, and he can be assured of the result.

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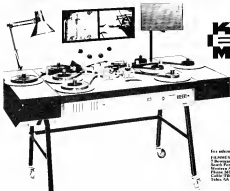


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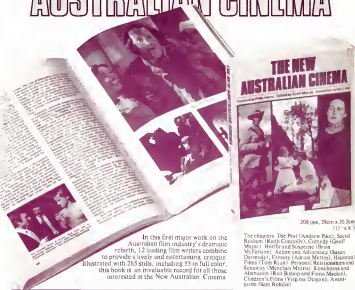
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on for the television presentation and a special program by the ATAA. A special episode is also taping the building.

The demand placed by the ATAA was into all union members registered for the Awards presentation, whether by the National ABC or ARI, should include a 30-second taping and about 30 minutes more. This was a week around the taping, rehearsal and presentation of the Awards. This meant an ATAA member would be in the building and there was only one who would get four times the taping duty as a 15-minute taping.

The members behind the demand are outlined by legislation since that time the 1982 Awards was a big presentation as well as a taping project. ATAA members should be paid for the time they spend taping or for the time they are in the building. The AFL represented by assistant income checker from Murray and Bob member David Price, said his presentation and taping duty was to be a 30-day job on the presentation. An agreement was then reached.

Had the above agreement not been reached, the taping continued throughout the year. The taping was again seen to be a taping project. The AFL was the only one who would have been taping. The AFL was a taping project. The AFL was a taping project. The AFL was a taping project.

ATAA

On September 1, the Melbourne Presidents Committee of the ATAA held a meeting. The meeting was held in the morning. The meeting was held in the morning. The meeting was held in the morning.

When Bob Alexander is finally agreed calling for action. The ATAA decided to take the matter to the Executive Committee of the ACTU.

The main reasons among Melbourne members to produce Tony Bennett's decision to produce *Back to the Future* in New South Wales. The main reasons among Melbourne members to produce Tony Bennett's decision to produce *Back to the Future* in New South Wales.

1. MURRAY

As well as the American Screen Actors Guild strike there is the American Screen Actors Guild strike in the United States. The American Screen Actors Guild strike in the United States. The American Screen Actors Guild strike in the United States.

Many local members have been to the opportunity and further the taping project. The taping project is a taping project. The taping project is a taping project.

The taping project is a taping project. The taping project is a taping project. The taping project is a taping project. The taping project is a taping project. The taping project is a taping project.

Some members are upset over their taping duty and the fact that they are not being paid for their taping duty. The taping project is a taping project. The taping project is a taping project.

DISSENT

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The National Film Theatre will be holding a series of workshops and seminars... The National Film Theatre will be holding a series of workshops and seminars...

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The 2nd Australian Film Conference will be held from November 12 to 14 at the... The 2nd Australian Film Conference will be held from November 12 to 14 at the...

Attracted Bill Sumner and Mark... People interested in attending the Conference can contact the Secretary... People interested in attending the Conference can contact the Secretary...

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The Melbourne

Mr. Macfarlane, administrator of the Sydney Film Festival, died of cancer on... Mr. Macfarlane, administrator of the Sydney Film Festival, died of cancer on...

Mr. Macfarlane was a member of the Sydney Film Festival... Mr. Macfarlane was a member of the Sydney Film Festival...

Mr. Macfarlane was a member of the Sydney Film Festival... Mr. Macfarlane was a member of the Sydney Film Festival...

The Death

All the last issue was to pass 1... All the last issue was to pass 1...

All the last issue was to pass 1... All the last issue was to pass 1...

All the last issue was to pass 1... All the last issue was to pass 1...

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All the last issue was to pass 1... All the last issue was to pass 1...

All the last issue was to pass 1... All the last issue was to pass 1...

All the last issue was to pass 1... All the last issue was to pass 1...

which he had and not some way... which he had and not some way...

Scott Mackay

INCOME TAX

Melbourne's income tax... Melbourne's income tax...

Melbourne's income tax... Melbourne's income tax...

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BOB ELLIS

Bob Ellis has written the screenplays of *Newsfront*, *Fatty Finn*, *Maybe This Time* (with wife Anne Brooksbank), and some 20 others. He is also one of Australia's most outspoken commentators on the film industry, as he proves in this discussion with producer Richard Brennan.

Which screenplays do you admire and perhaps try to emulate?

Fred Raphael, who wrote *Two For the Road* and *The Chattering Primate*, and Dennis Porter, who wrote *Pommes Frites* and *Heaven*, which is the best thing I've seen anybody ever. Also, Tom Stoppard, Francis Tourneur, Neil Simon, Paddy Chayefsky, Woody Allen and Paul Mazursky, whose works are known. Then there are David Mamet who wrote *Moonstruck* and a number of television plays, and William Goldman, who wrote *Butch Cassidy* and *The Great Waldo Pepper*.

Most of all there is Ingmar Bergman, who has had the Scandinavian courage to do it all: comedy, tragedy, allegory, exploration of inner states, analysis of Marxism and bourgeois forms. The best single screenplay in existence, in my humble view, is *Sadness* of a *Summer Night*.

I think Bergman knows the way in which the screen is limited, and extended. And when I see *Wild Strawberries* for the 20th time it fills me up and makes me cry, the way *Yankee* or Shakespeare's best play *Henry IV Part One* does. I think I think in a man's whole life or emotion, his whole way of behaving — or, the true calm reflection of a whole historical era, the way *Newsfront* should have been and wasn't, the way *Yankee* and *Amadeus* were.

The film was big enough to be as abundant as this, and we have a day to serve this abundance, even in the one house on the water, with 10 people and an atmosphere. You can't afford to do less. Women rub-

bing hands in fanny-flapping leather is no longer enough. We must do more than this, as did Cohere, *Midnight Express*, *Annie Hall*, *Brubaker*, *Memento* and *Apocalypse Now*. Not only is it good art to do more, it is good commerce.

The great unbroken law of the recent Australian cinema is that good films make money — *The Newsfront*, *My Brilliant Career*, *Mad Max* and *Breaker Morant* did. And the last good film, that it theory should have made money, like *Time*, *The 00th Angry Street*, *Ellis Fraser* and *Ned Kelly*, all lost money because it isn't commercial theory that gets you into profit, and it's not budgetary limits, but quality.

The only apparent exception to this is *Carly's Child*, but that could have done well had its publicity campaign not been bloody awful, and had it been put back on after it deservedly won its big awards.

Quality isn't new money this way. *Jack*, *Strawberries* and *Marlon* stands together in a bad film will lose money whereas *My Brilliant Career*, with unknowns, will make it.

What is the script development arrangement you have with the New South Wales Film Corporation?

I have to do 30 feature scripts over two years in theory, and usually in practice, I have to deliver first and second drafts on given dates. I get \$1700 for each script, and if the NSWFC wants to buy one, they must pay an additional \$12,000 within 30 days of receipt of the second draft. After that, they can do what they like.





"I gave them 33 ideas and said, 'You pick five and we'll pick five', which they did. The five they chose were picked because they could all be made for 140,000 each. I am pretty sure that's not the way they should go ahead."

How many of the scripts have you finished?

Two, and three more will be finished in two months. I wrote one with Denny Lawrence, one with John Hirschert and two with my wife, Annie. She is also writing one on her own.

How do you feel about collaboration?

It used to be the only way I could work, because only the guy induced by somebody else would make me finish a script. I have now improved to the point where I can write on my own. But collaboration is very much like I have all over you get an intense, emotional intensity with the person you are working with and, when you are no longer working, you are very stiff with them.

Against any mathematical logic, collaboration produces more done than is many times — perhaps four times. It has advantages because everybody differs, and when you are having a bad day, your partner might be having a good one.

There seems to be a limit as to whom I can collaborate with, however. I said to them there was no limit, but I think it would be very hard to collaborate again with, say, Frank Brister.

Given you have written more 28 feature scripts, it must be a problem finding enough directors and producers to make them...

It is a fundamental difficulty, and I think Anne and I are going to have to begin to post as executive producers. I don't know what that would be, but we must try. Unfortunately, most of the good on-line directors have those obsessions of their own, and they often waste two years trying to get something off the ground. I don't believe anything is worth that amount of time.

In my experience, it is possible to turn out five first drafts a year. It takes six months to six months to do second drafts, which goes down to a stage where they are worth doing. If the first draft is terrible, I don't believe there is much you can do. Development is just an excuse for junketing. That said, of course, people experience like Star, which had in cope with the complexities of the writer, but there is a lot of good money thrown after him — to the lucky.

You say your scripts appear to have bounced from you having had the opportunity to visit locations...



"Unfortunately, most of the good on-line directors here have obsessions of their own, and they often waste two years trying to get something off the ground. I don't believe anything is worth that amount of time."

Yes, I think it's good to have locations and nature in mind, because you can generally write better. I don't think 'Tarbo' films — like *Barbie* — work.

What areas will you involve yourself in as executive producer?

I would like to regain my will on the scene, and watch-out, the scene. I also wouldn't mind interfering in the publicity, which in Australia is usually dreadful. "There are two greatest nature. Nature found them guilty" — what more can I say?

I think the problem is that you can work with a director or a producer, but you can't work with two of them. You have three wills pushing in three different directions, and you always wind up with loss. So, a writer has to take other of those two roles to have any artistic satisfaction in the film business. And when they do — as in the case of Woody Allen, Billy Wilder or Sylvester Stallone — it usually works out pretty well.

In this country, producers don't realize that in a good script every full stop and comma contributes to the total effect. You can't rip out 100 pages of David Copperfield and believe people aren't going to notice.

There is also a point (like an weeks before shooting) when a script should not be interfered with. On *Maybe This Time*, we were motivated, three days before shooting the great. Whitham sequence that all references to

looking the harbor. It's a nervous scene, the old boyfriend wants to divorce his wife and marry Fran. In the original script, he says, "Love Park down there." And the sign, "I know, I've lived here for some time." He then says, "Sinking it all right as you?" and so on.

What happened was Lark Park had been burnt down and they didn't want to include a cut-away of it, which they didn't have to, anyway. So they changed the line on the day to "Sydney Harbour." And the said, "I know, I've been in Sydney for some time." That made it, so scriptwriters, look like fools.

Then again, as Chris Hayward noted in the *Good-Enough* (New York) *Newsweek*, he admitted that beautiful line: "You don't see too many indoor swimming pools these days." ...

I don't mind what actors do, because they are fortunate beings. They are much more intelligent, have a wider experience, greater courage, concern, idealism and capacity for self-criticism than any of us. In contrast, it's the producers and directors to whom I object. They have very limited lives, dangerous tendencies and rigid minds.

Have you ever been in a position where a post has been written for a particular actor, but the actor wasn't available?

Yes, on *Maybe This Time* where we replaced the coquettish Jack Thompson with Mike Preston. It almost worked, but it was specifically Jack's part — as was the part played by Gerard Kennedy in *Newsweek*. I think Jack and Bill would have made pretty good brothers, but you surely know they were, the way the film was ultimately lost.

I think correct casting is a hidden factor in the success of a film. *Saturday Night* says it's 30 per cent. And I, and my name, Len Mervin and Elvira Alexander in *Kramer vs. Kramer* — it wouldn't work. It has to be the two who played it.

How do you see the future of the film industry?

The thing I fear most is the multinational obsession, which I call *McDonaldisation*. Just here, to go, I fear it because it is insu-

"It's the producers and directors to whom I object. They have very limited lives, dangerous tendencies and rigid minds."

ficent and will only lead to inflation and the devaluation of the industry, as it did in Britain and Canada. All films that record its provincial and culturally very specific life in *Brainer Maanaa* is in the cycle of Southern films starring Burt Reynolds, or in *Jaws*, *Day After Tomorrow* and *Game With the Wind*.

I know it would have been cross-culturally useful for *Jaws* and *Day After Tomorrow* to have been played by Ruby Hunter and Trey Donahue and Tim Jousie to have been played by Paul Newman, but I profoundly believe that success would not have lain in the way of those directors, or in the history of those countries' films, had such international casting decisions been made.

It isn't simple chauvinism that I recommend. If you look carefully at the cast of *Brainer Maanaa* you will notice, to your alarm, that half of them are British-born: Chase Haywood, Rod McKean and John Waters, as well as Edward Woodward. So it is not when the actors come from, but how well they are seen to be Australian.

I have no quarrel with Robert Menzies playing an Australian. I have very little quarrel with Richard Chamberlain playing an Australian, and I'd have no worry about my Lisa Eickhorn, who is an American and played beautifully, a girl from Yorkshire in Yanks, playing an Australian, because that can obviously do it. It is only a matter of whether it rings true.

People mistake the shadow for the substance. They think that *Brainer Maanaa* succeeds because of the major events in his films, be words because the minor events in his films are so believable. The reactions of service station attendants and hotel clerks, or taxi drivers and railway porters, not culturally explicit and perfectly observed. You cannot accuse a country that does not exist and speak money unless you are doing it in the context of science fiction. All real-Australian films disappear, and all real-Pacific films will disappear, too, because



"I'd have no worry about, my Lisa Eickhorn, who played, beautifully, a girl from Yorkshire in Yanks, playing an Australian."

audiences can tell what's phony. You get amazing experiments like *Legally Bizarre* or *The Towels* made in English with Elliot Gould. It was a very intelligent thing to do in terms of book-keeping, but it's a disaster. You also get atrocious like *La hana*, or a miscalculation like *Blue Up and Zulu*, in which the director and the actors leave behind what they know and attempt to impersonate into their visual things they don't know.

We are, for better or worse, involved in the nation in which we grew up. You can't hope to feed the world by merely putting quotation marks under the chief works of other nations. You have to try to define what inherently and dramatically lies in your own nation, and work within it.

It is very depressing in Australia because our history is not well documented and it is not that strong. And our personalities are very low in number, partly because the publishing industry has always been very weak and biographies are not published often, and those histories that are published are not written by inspired men. But it's all we have, and I only hope that I can deal with it. One should not imagine that one can somehow get away with perverting what we have into an imitation of what we don't.

Now, of course, since *My Brilliant Career* and *Breaker Morahan* have done well critically and commercially, people believe they should spend a lot of money on projects that are less of landmarks and things like that, rather than quietly working in rooms. I don't think they are right. We should be making films like *Mushrooms*, as well as films like *The Electric Horseman*.

There was a superstition, for a while, that budgets had to be under \$200,000. Now I think there is a superstition that starts at \$1 million.

Most people don't want the lower-budget, indigenous films to disappear. But do you see that happening?

If the script is good enough I believe it will be made. If it isn't good enough, then it is more likely to get through if like *Chase Haywood* it is suitable to American television, i.e., it parallels American genres.

People are now fearful that only bad films will be made or attempted, but I think the good scripts will go through. I think there is enough shame left.

One possible mechanism for promoting low-budget filmmaking is Equity's restriction on the use of overseas actors in films which receive government funding. What do you think of that scheme?

"People are now fearful that only bad films will be attempted, but I think the good scripts will get through. I think there is enough shame left."

I am in favor of it, and the reason is that if, say, *Southcoast* and *Bisc* had been made, and as was in the budget, James Coburn had been paid \$750,000 and *Grasshopper* Kennedy \$20,000, and, as would have been the case, Kennedy got better reviews than Coburn for his performance, then Kennedy's price would have risen to \$200,000 a feature. Other actors and actresses' prices would have risen accordingly, and pretty soon Australia's average budget would have been \$4 million. Even American money, no longer fleeing Australia, might move out and go to New Zealand.

Tony Buckley recently asked me to write some dialogue for *Julie Christie*. He offered me \$3000 and a free trip around the world, together with a walk in a cage at Wauke with Christie. My immediate response was, "Good God, she is getting \$245,000 more than me."

So I thought I'd cap my price at \$15,000, in which case I was freed to think that's a lesson for us all. Now, had her price been \$200,000, I would have been delighted with a free ticket, and the scene of high life. But, I probably would have shown up in the show, and she would have said, "Look, Warren has just popped in for a week, could you come back in August?"

Some people see the move towards internationalization as a reaction to a widespread feeling that government funding could disappear...

I think there is a bit like *Blowing the Asahi* for the fact that we are part of the press of the other period. It is a movie got by people who were more rather by a place around the world and have a drink in Los Angeles with Lee Marvin, then work here.

I don't think there is much danger of government money drying up. Films have been too much subsidized and they don't make money — certainly less per year than it takes to make *Conan's* loans.

Also, film stars are powerful enemies for politicians to make. If Jack Thompson and Judy Duns go up on movie and say, "They're taking us, not than us," people may well vote them out. I can't see politicians taking that.

There is one other reason, too, which is that the film industry has no natural enemies: there is no *Soviet* saying it must be removed out, or *Ralph Nader* saying "It's unsafe at any speed". It does, of course, have an organizational flaw, films tend to be funded in only 50 per cent by government bodies. So, it is not to see that the NSWFC has been the bedrock and gone to more or less 100 per cent funding on some projects. I hope that example will be followed, because it is not against.

I think a number of multinational kinds of films will be made, though the overseas ones will be of



second rank. The films will first, and the experiment will die as heartily as did the false nostalgia which provoked the new made-for-TV films.

People got born in their bedrooms and internationalization is one of them. It's a really silly one, too, because it hasn't worked in the past. There have been about 35 such films and they have all lost money except *Pacific at Hanging Rock*, and that didn't make money, as the international chauvinism of Rachel Roberts.

The situation is terribly fluid at this time, and by some stroke of luck the U.S. Circuitry across each year. Last year it was *My Brilliant Career* and this year it's *Breaker Morant*. You feel good to be Australian for a while, and the cross poems and the pink pants.

You can't understand the effect of things like the AFI screenings where people do distrust the Gummage-type films, and do quite like the Australian films. And I think there can be played upon them, rhetoric can be misapplied. Some the director is there, and it is most, possibly, there when the successful — like the McDoyals — subscribe to it. But I think it will go, it's a South Sea bubble.

Newsfront

How did "Newsfront" originate?

It was originally envisaged by Mike Molloy and David Ellick as a documentary on 1930s rock groups. They got together some old newsreels and then talked to Philippe Moss, who had made *Breaker Cas You Spin a Ding!*. He suggested they meet into the footage mounted sequences shows the lives of the cameramen. This was an excellent idea.

Now, it was quite obvious to Ellick that only one person could write it and that was Richard Neville. So Ellick took Neville's name to the APC, who said that Neville didn't have credits in film, and that Ellick should come back with a film writer. Eventually, it devolved on me.

We then had an afternoon's conversation and decided we would have a great Australian wedding, a great Australian funeral, a great Australian fuck, a great Australian bushfire, a great Australian flood and so on. This led to the first draft, which more or less became the final film, though it took 10 more drafts to get back to the original.

Ellick became nervous and said, "We want more detail." So, I went away to the library for a day and looked up old advertisements, and wrote in things like the soundtrack on the radio. I also worked closely with Howard Rubin, who had been a young cameraman at the time of the Mildred floods. Howard at

"Then, the long attrition of cuts began. I finally wouldn't make any more, and they brought in the auteur of Skippy behind my back. I became irritable and threatened to go to court, and all that."

that stage was going to direct it, but he was sidestepped from this respect, whereby the genius of Phil Noyce who determined he should direct it, and worked on Ellick in this end.

Then we did another draft, the third, with Noyce. It was the best, and was used by Ellick to either get the money, or raise the snail of it. Then, the long attrition of cuts began. I finally couldn't make any more and they brought in the auteur of *Skippy* to write behind my back. I became irritable and threatened to go to court, and all that.

In the meantime, I got most of the actors I had written parts for, though only by the accident of their doing the best auditions. I remember narrowly nudging out of John Swan's role as Ray Livermore, and so on. It was an emergency and chaotic experience, out of which I learned a hell of a lot.

I was scared when *Newsfront* was repeatedly voted the best film

at the Cannes Film Festival by overseas critics and I assumed I was either going mad or it was a cosmic conspiracy.

Andrew Sarris complained recently that it hadn't been nominated for the Academy Award...

Well, I complained too. But I am not sure what that proves except that arbitrary budget figures are stupid. Think of all the trouble that derived from Ellick's arbitrary budget of \$307,000, or whatever it was. The film could have been made for \$250,000 or \$250,000 in its original form, and I don't think anybody could produce the film to the big fix itself.

The unbelievably great, powerful and cuddly David Fairman believes that you should decide on the film you are going to make and then make it, whatever it costs. I think that's fair. The old rule of "half a

loaf is better than no bread" no longer applies.

I think the surreal in town of the late 1930s, Murdoch and Soapwood, has been wonderfully used in this respect, because everybody's habitual way of making a film looks a little silly in the light of their guidance and reason. They too would like to make a film under \$1 million, but the idea of saving a budgetary limit of, say, \$150,000 seems strange to them, and they are right. You certainly can't write a film for a budget, but you can't write it and then say the budget is going to be no more than this.

How do you feel about "Newsfront" four years after?

I think it is a very good film. It should be as good as *Vanya* — i.e., the most happy of a nation for 10 years — and it's not *Newsfront* has excellent glimpses from that luxury, but it's not the thing itself.

I think the flood scene is terrific, and the scene is very good. There is also something about the shooting style which was very Australian, something about the beautiful simplicity of the tree was beautifully accompanied in the visual style. I don't think it was accidental, and I don't explain what it was, but it was what moved people the most. These were the fathers, and they weren't such bad fathers. They were truly men and women remembered in



"I was stunned when Newsfront was repeatedly voted the best film at the Cannes Film Festival by overseas critics, and I assumed I was either going mad or it was a cosmic conspiracy."

any way. Only a really good director can get that double edge.

Backpacks in *The Garris* and *Willy the Kid* give the viewer and the heroes of the story, as in *The Wild Bunch*. Noyce gets the ordinariness and the specialness of the people in a singular way in *Newsfront*.

How do you feel about the decision to film "Newsfront" partly in color and partly in black and white?

That was my idea. I knew we wouldn't, as unknown filmmakers, be able to make a black and white film which was the ideal. So I worked out points where it could change. Noyce ignored all these and made different ones.

I think black and white is one of the many ranges of cinema and it should be used. And anytime somebody does interest in color — however capriciously like Lindsay Anderson in *If* and wherever he was in *A Man and a Woman* — it works sensationally well. The classic use of this technique was in *The Wizard of Oz* where the world is dull, and Oz is color!

Black and white is wonderful for tragedy, suspense and serious power. Color trivializes and distracts, and is never used well, except when it is chosen to black and white.

The magic of the screen — the silver screen which people came out to see in the '30s — was due to the fact that it was different from life or a way people couldn't define. It was like life, but it was distant enough from it for people to look up at it as God-like dimension. Color doesn't do that, and you have to be a real genius to use it in that way. Occasionally, somebody like Federico Fellini does, or Rob Farrow (but it's very rare).

Maybe This Time

Did you have much trouble getting "Maybe This Time" off the ground?

It took five years. We offered it to everybody you can name, and then all said no. There was Gill Armstrong, Sam Wallace, Tim Buckley, Donald Crisp and Karl Hainman. Ken said yes, but we got him into trouble with his chosen producer, Tom Hayden, and it didn't happen. I also showed it to David Reeves and Brian Hall, and they hated it.

Eventually, Anne and I re-read the script and found it was so good at all I then re-wrote it with a punch line, and bullied the NSWFC, which was a bit uncertain about its commercial potential, into doing it. They then imposed a producer and a director, who wasn't our first choice, but with whom we finally agreed.



"Black and white is wonderful for tragedy, suspense and serious content. Colour trivializes and distracts, and is never used well, except when it is chosen to black and white."

Readhow also imposed a lead actress. They wanted Judy Morris, Helen Morse or Wendy Hughes, and Judy was the only one with back teeth and therefore the only one with any hope of not looking regrettably beautiful all the time. I still think she looks too beautiful to have those problems, and the correct choice would have been somebody like Anna Voldka or Michelle Finckh. But Judy is terribly good in it, and it is by far her best performance, which is a considerable achievement. She was the Best Actress Award. I saw her. A couple of times, when watching her do things. I felt like crying.

It was a hard film to do, because in a way it should be dull, depressing and populated by ordinary and ugly people. But it's neither way

it should be handsome and well-dressed as it is. There is no formal way to do these things, and fashion is women's film when nobody every year. *Sunday Bloody Sunday* was a handsome film, whereas *Seattle Cowboy* was pretty, with some pretty ordinary-looking people. I think you go back-and-forth between these two things and you can pick it wrong. I think we did.

Fatty Finn

How did "Fatty Finn" originate?

I used to have conversations with Chris McGill where I would ask questions like, "What is the most

obvious children's film one could make in Australia?" One day, after 30 seconds of thought, he came back with the obvious answer, which was *Ginger Muggs*. And being too clever by half, I thought, "Oh no, let's make it *Fatty Finn*, because there already exists a new film on that subject — a classic called *Kid Stakes* by Tai O'Neil — which we can show to film investors and say 'Our film is going to be like that.' Then McGill went away and after a close study of the phone book came up with something called *The Children's Film Corporation*. This turned out to be Vivian Green and John Sexton. Conversations subsequently became confused.

I wrote the script and it was funded on the first draft because it was so good. But Vivian didn't understand it, owing to his meagre grasp of English. We had conversations along the lines of "Who is the Don Bradman?" "Well, he's a famous sportsman. Vivian is Irish, he's so famous that in a classic children's novel on King Arthur, *A Good and Future King*, the quality of the diversity and competence of Sir Lancelot's sword fighting is described by comparing him to Don Bradman." "Who is this King Arthur?" he asked.

There was another time when we were having an argument about plot. Vivian said, "All children's films should be like *Raiders* (based with a clear simple plot)." I said, "How about *Alvin & Howard*?" and he replied, "I haven't seen the film." This nonsense went on for a long time.

Anyway, once the script had been funded, Sexton demanded 118 major changes. I had put an elaborate course in my contract, but I was then confronted by the APC's new lawyer who said my contract meant I had to make the changes. So I took a deep breath and made them, word for word for what they asked. The result was so ludicrous that they didn't call me for six months and I presumed the

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"I don't think there is much danger of government money drying up. Films have been our best ambassadors and they don't cost much — certainly less per year than it costs to move Canberra's lambs."



1980 Australian

On September 17 at the Regent Theatre, Sydney, the 1980 Australian Film Awards were announced. The presentation, produced by Rae Birch, directed by Jacqui Cullifern and hosted by Graham Kennedy, was televised nationally by the ABC. The first in a four-year deal with the ABC, the 1980 Film Awards seemed at last to have reached the standard long sought by the organizers, the Australian Film Institute.

The winners of the 1980 Awards were

INDUSTRY AWARDS

Best Film: *Breaker Morant*, producer Matt Currell

Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role: Jack Thompson *Breaker Morant*

Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role: Tracy Mann, *Hard Knocks*

Best Achievement in Directing: Bruce Beresford, *Breaker Morant*

Best Screenplay: Jonathan Hardy, David Stevens, Bruce Beresford, *Breaker Morant*

Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role: Bryan Brown, *MJ*

Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role: Jill Perryman, *Maybe This Time*

Best Original Music Score: Peter Sculthorpe, *Margaret*

Best Achievement in Art Direction: David Capping, *Breaker Morant*

Best Achievement in Cinematography: Don McLeann, *Breaker Morant*

Best Achievement in Film Editing: William Anderson, *Breaker Morant*

Best Achievement in Costume Design: Anna Senior, *Breaker Morant*

Best Sound: Gary Wilkins, William Anderson, Jerome Clarke, Phil Todd, *Breaker Morant*

JURY AWARDS

Very Price: Don McLeann, *Hard Knocks*

Best Short Fiction Film: *Guy's Story*, directed by Richard McPhail

Best Documentary Film: *Frontline*, directed by David Barclay

Best Animated Film: *Pump Pump Up*, Antonia Starkevic

Best Experimental Film: *Self-Portrait — Blood Red*, directed by Ivan Durand

Cinematography Awards: Silver Medal David

Finer, *Bird of the Thunder Woman*, Bruce Moffat, Tim Cowan, Peter Burt, *No Such Place*

Special Awards:
"For its Original Concept": *Black Money*, Chris Fisher

"For Courageous Filmmaking": *Give Them a Chance*, Jiri Kordel

AFI DIRECTORS' AWARD

Raymond Langford Award: Tim Burstall

To report on the 1980 judging processes and give an overview of the year's film output, *Cinema Papers* sent Brian Sheehy to the Awards screenings. Here is his report:

The Australian Film Awards have been run by the Australian Film Institute since 1958. The presentation night, usually in September, is preceded by months of work, part of which is the screening of selected feature films to AFI members in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Perth.

To be eligible for entry in the feature category a film must be narrative in form, and more than 60 minutes in length. It must have a capital city commercial release of a minimum six weeks, at least one month before the presentation date.

AFI members who like myself are not directly involved in production can vote only for the Best Film Award. Only industry professionals are entitled to vote in specific categories; for example, only editors are eligible to vote for the editing award.

The competition is run according to strict attendance rules: a member must see every film to be eligible to vote and acknowledge a refusal to subscribe screenings if he causes any film.

Most of us "Gay folk" go along because it is a good way to test the new wangs in one burst, to compare new mood, style — "gashy" possibly — with previous years. This year no one seems very opinionated: the climate is politically frosty and financially dry. And where have all the big names gone? Bruce Beresford is there, but an alphabetical roll call through Tim Burstall, Tim Cowan, John Dugan, Fred Schoep, Michael Thoroff and Peter West brings only silence — gone to the U.S. everyone!

And how will the films compare with the halcyon years of the middle and late '70s?

1974's *Cadillac*, David's *Playhouse*, *Plumie* at *Wagtail*, *Rock*.

1975: *Dan's Fyve*, *Mad Dog Morgan*, *The F2 Holden*, *Storm Boy*.

1976: *Newfront*, *The Last Wave*, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*, *Mouth to Mouth*, *The Gathering of Witches*.

1978: *My Brilliant Career*, *Mad Max*, *In Search of Adam*, *Tim*, *The Last of the Summer*.

Except for *Breaker Morant*, no one seems to know anything about the films that tend to enter the 1980s. (Disjointed) names such as John

Heery, Peter Maxwell and Chris McGill used to be on a (fruitless search of *Cinema Papers* indexes in the honeymoon rally, ever?

Last year there were 17 films in 1978. It is 1977: 12 in 1975 and 15 in 1975. This year there are only 11.

The stalwarts who stick out the entire program have a certain movie familiarity about them. The fringe-line people, the actors, are easy to recognize, so too are the addicts who seem never to miss a screening of anything, anywhere.

There are also the "black-white" people, the backbone of the industry, who seemingly exist only in the credits. Over the sandwiches and coffee, courtesy of the AFI, one might meet a freelance editor, an art director from a commercial house, or a designer from the ABC — or a teacher or craze. In this atmosphere of contradictions everyone tries to be generous about the film you screened, guessing its success, discussing its feelings. This year, the success seemed just a little around.

My session got off to an uninspiring start with Gene W. Scott's *Mystery Island*, a children's story of the conventional, desert-island-advantage type, complete with a suspicious, but finally friendly, beachcomber racism and Indian twanging, opulent packages.

All this is embellished by some glowing but mostly irrelevant underwater photography. It is never possible to take the danger in the children seriously, and they are hardened by such looks and barest dialogue that the happy ending seems more than they deserve.



Tracy Mann in *Hard Knocks*

Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role

Don McLeann's *Hard Knocks* is no arcade or sylvan idyll. Sam (Tracy Mann) is a hard-core punk kid who gets a stretch at a correctional institution. As her hair grows and her manner softens, she is greeted by a dispositive social worker for a straight life so a model. All the odds are against her: bleary double underdogs, winged cops, old men from Wollaton and the trials of prey of the fashion and modeling worlds.

The film in part picks up a thread from *Mouth to Mouth*, and takes it out, but lacks warmth and simplicity and is over-endowed with unnecessary scenes and superfluous dialogue.

Film Awards

Some characters are drawn larger than life in their introductions; that disappear, never to be seen again and the construction seems unnecessarily complicated.

It could have been a small, simple and endearing film, but it isn't, only Tracy Mann's performance is remarkable.

Peter Maxwell's Touch and Go is about women at the opposite end of the social scale from Sam who pulls rubberbands on a scale never approached by the other kids. An unlikely trio of glamorous women — Fiona (Charley Coulson), the associate wife, Eve (Wendy Hughes), a failed actress who does look-alike stuff on a children's radio program; Millie (Carmen Duncan), a self-employed locksmith — pull meticulously-planned and carefully-executed heists.

Most of the money goes to a struggling progressive school, the balance to "important" things. Their lack of interest in education and children have cost us no doubt that they real motive is the thrills.

Except for a few moments near the end, the plot never lets up and there isn't a spare shot or a loose word in the entire 92 minutes of the film. It's exciting and very funny — the gang escapes from their big job along a jeep, with half the loaded guests beamed and in night attire, following them.

Touch seems to do major damage to her car every time she takes it out, but it's only this on the soundtrack — the (going) it and so does the same.

Chris McGill's Maybe This Time is a serious and sensitive film that will strike many responsive emotional and political chords. In the wider context of Supply bills being blocked, a map decision and the consequent change in government, Finn (Judy Hottel) finds herself at one of life's crossroads. Thirty years old, a teacher-turned-research assistant, her search for fulfillment through her relationships brings her to the end of a "wasted" four years with the arrogant, married, high-level public servant, Sirpette (Bill Hunter).

The possible avenue open to her include returning to the boy-meet-girl, Alan (Ken Shorter), becoming sexually involved with her boss the academic, Paddy (Mike Pappas) adopting an independent lifestyle by buying her own house, or going overseas to join a woman friend. To the detriment of herself, and the film, she takes them all, turning a crossroad into a peak-hour intersection with no traffic signs.

The film becomes sprawling, able to portray Finn's anguish but too crowded to explore the reasons for failures except through the feelings of the man with whom she is involved. Her apparent powerlessness in relationships, however, is in keeping with the personal and political apathy which haunts the film.

John Honey's Mungamala is the first feature film to be backed by the Tasmanian Film Corporation and is an auspicious beginning. *Mungamala* too is about a woman's search — that of a black Tasmanian woman for her

murdered people and her collapsed culture. She is the keeper not only of the lore of her tribe, but also of the first mythology, its truths and ceremony.

That, and much else, she imparts to a white child, a girl of five or six years, who goes voluntarily with her on her journey to the coast in search of her uncle. She finds only death and secrets and sisters, and her power — fire — is strangely shared by the child who needs a flame for a white man.

She goes back to the island, returns the child and dies. The child's father plays her a duet (European) ballad, but the child acquires her proper conduct to the spirit world by putting the torch to the shed in which the body lies.

It is a slow, but moving film, a filmmaker's answer to the illustrated lecture that was *The Last Tasmanian*. *Mungamala*, in essence, tells the same story, but in a way which will serve the memory long after the high-ended marketing of its predecessor is forgotten.



Bryan Brown in Role
Best Performance
by an Actor in
a Supporting Role
in *Breaker Morant*

Devoted Stephen Wallcott and actor Bryan Brown teamed previously in *Love Letters from Terence Rattall*, the film which introduced both to most filmgoers. While Brown's face has become well-known, Wallcott has made only one movie film, *Sir*, again with Bryan Brown. It is a longer and more confident than the first, but less successful, the claustrophobic atmosphere of the past where the action takes place stifles the film.

Back in prison after three years out, "Chris" (Bryan Brown) has better memories of earlier beatings at Goring's Gaol which followed the non-violent protest he had organized. He is determined to keep his nose clean, but fails; he thus incurs the only action which he believes will work.

The rising tensions in the gaol are not mirrored in the film which, although it succeeds in maintaining a degree of tension, fails to build it in the necessary climax. The failure of the race, as political action and as cinema, is followed by the inevitable beatings, but we have seen it all before.

Jon Barry's *China Reaction* adopts the 50-minute television drama formula — a puzzling, high-speed beginning, a chase-race-race ending and a soft centre — and stretches it to 92 minutes.

Mildred authority in cut to silence the dying man who cut the world of danger from a nuclear waste (treatment plant) damaged in an earth tremor. What else but divine providence leads him to Paradise Valley to be cared for by an unsuspecting couple on a weekend away from it all. Luckily, she is a trained nurse and he can drive like hell and doesn't mind Sunday his Friday, contaminated soil — the world is saved.

Ross Denney's Fast Cat is a silly film about a young journalist and her television news-camerasman boyfriend who seize the chance to make a film about a nuclear implosion of popular culture who may have graduated from pain home movies to real death ("nuclear") film. The pair gets involved in the Basky scene, first on his luxury yacht and later at his apartment.

The best part of the film is the sloping as a spin which assures the audience that any resemblance to any person living, etc., is purely coincidental — the film's only laugh.



Breaker Morant
Winner of almost every major award

Three other films were screened: Bruce Beresford's *Breaker Morant*, Rod Hardy's *Bliss* and Susan Wilson's *Heartbeat*. All have been selected unanimously and screened in Cinema Pappas and elsewhere.

And now for my vote for the Best Film. For public and performance: **Breaker Morant**. Beresford and the South Australia Film Corporation apparently haven't been told that the honeymoon hour and wait a head and made an excellent film from difficult material.

For sheer entertainment of the thrills-and-laughter variety: **Touch and Go**. I hope it fills cinemas for months, helping us to forget for 92 minutes that life wasn't meant to be any.

And for poignancy, honesty and grace: **Mungamala**, the one we'd all like to forget a



Al Pacino (left)
and Willem Friedkin

CRUISING 1

T O M R Y A N

"The major reason to make a film are to move people emotionally, to move them to laughter, tears or to fear.... I've not interested in an interesting movie I am interested in got level reaction. The American cinema is a kind of love, hard, story-oriented cinema, just as American literature is. Scott Fitzgerald, who's probably one of the greatest writers that the country ever produced, had a piece of paper on his wall that said, 'Action is Character.' And that's what I think is best about the American cinema. There's a kind of muscular, visceral, story-telling sense in it [that] I feel is best embodied in the work of Ronald Walsh, D. W. Griffith, Ford, Hawks, Wilder. It's about the American people and people all over the world expect from the American cinema...."

(Willem Friedkin)

Few films in recent years have been accompanied by the level of anger that has attached itself to *Cruising*. Even before the completion of its location shoot in New York, the picture against the film in the American gay press was intense, admirably organized and effectively used to focus attention on the repression of homosexuality which seems embodied within our culture. Similarly in Amsterdam, at the weeks surrounding the film's release, the charges against *Cruising* were underway, along the activity showed as sufficient indication that "this film could be a health hazard."¹

The view of the film as "colonially ide and threatening in all of its 'messages'" has been taken up by the film reviewers in the press, creating an unpropitious atmosphere with the gay community. Words like "bigotry", "contempting" and "deprecat" have elevated its accusation against the film. Yet little close consideration has been attempted to substantiate

Much has been said in the cause of sensationalism about *Cruising*, but little serious commentary is available on the film. To in part rectify this situation, *Cinema Papers* publishes the following critiques by Tom Ryan and Adrian Martin. The articles were written to complement each other, the authors sharing a respect for *Cruising*, though pursuing their individual concerns.

these existences and it is very difficult to locate precisely what it is about. *Cruising* that has aroused such fury. Most attempts to talk about the film, even in the most basic descriptive terms, are characterized by a lack of attention to detail, personate assertions taking the place of the terms of rational argument. One of many examples is Campaigner's approving use of Vito Russo's comments from *Gay News*:

"All the guys in the film live in fifty no-trap hotel rooms. When Pacino makes love to his girlfriend, the background music is a slash guitar. When guys have sex, the music is violent, disorienting [and] hard rock."²

Disappointingly, only the few reviews that have undertaken to defend the film have offered any detailed examination of it, and, unfortunately, all of these seem to have come from the gay press. As yet no serious analysis has appeared elsewhere, and even the journals devoted solely to film have yet to produce their discussion of *Cruising*.

As far as I can gather, the sense of the hostility to *Cruising* are several. That its representation of homosexual life is inaccurate, or else that it is limited to the activities of a fringe group (the latter point is endorsed by a disclaimer at the beginning of the film). That it is a badly-made film which is clumsily shot and put together, its narrative confusions serving as ample evidence of the filmmakers' incompetence. That its 'messages' are likely to produce a general antipathy towards gays and to the advancement of gay rights, perhaps even providing a wave of violence against homosexuals.

The last objection cannot be countered, any more than it can be demonstrated. Critics against homosexuals, such as those which provided a source for *Cruising*, are all too commonplace in our community and beyond, but those social and psychological factors which produce such critics are notoriously difficult to pinpoint. *Cruising* is in no way an "innocent"

1. "Shooting On Film," *American Film Institute*, 1734, pp. 71-72.

2. *Campaign*, No. 34, p. 1.

3. *Am Scripts*, "Cruising" For A. Bickel, *Screen Days*, April, 1983, p. 31.

4. *Campaign*, No. 34, p. 6.

5. The first example I have come across is a review by Scott Ferguson in *The Advocate* (U.S.), April 13, 1983.

film — it exists as a cultural artifact, a product of a complex ideology. But to say this is in no way to see it as a product of, or even a catalyst for, particular patterns of criminal behavior. The cinema in our community seriously need *Cruising* to stimulate their imaginations, and the representations of homosexuality in the film would seem to be of the kind more likely to discourage than incite violence than induce them.

The other objections are best discussed through an analysis of *Cruising* in terms of its system of representations, its "realism," and its narrative construction. Without such a consideration of *Cruising*'s formal strategies, any attempt to condemn or to defend the film is doomed to the realm of surface impression, which reflects more upon the speaker than anything else.

Cruising can justifiably be seen as belonging to that tradition of American cinema defined as sagaciously above by its writer and director, William Friedkin. Its narrative adopts the structure of the investigation tale, as its central character, Steve Burns (Al Pacino), seeks out a killer in the fringe world of S & M in New York. Its style is "hard-boiled" in that Burns cannot remain detached from what he is doing. His investigation may be successful in bringing a killer to justice, but it may also affect him in a way that challenges the security of his place in the world.

Cruising can also be identified as an intervention for several other generic modes: the film noir, the "police horror film" (Friedkin's label) and the "psycho drama." A dominant visual element of the film is darkness in the streets at night, a world of night-time activity and in the nocturnal flux of black which are used to punctuate between sequences but also to slide that period of time during which sexual activity occurs. This is most notable in the first murder sequence, but also in those scenes when Burns has been picked up. The use of darkness and the links to black seem to be Friedkin's strategy for avoiding any literal representation of sex between males, with the effort that for specific details of homosexuality are rendered ambiguous and linked with the general sense of threat. Darkness in the "Steve Burns" intensity serves the function of suggesting hidden aspects of the human psyche, dangerous sides to the human personality that are a threat to order, to what the dramatic context of these is the wish to assert as normality. *Cruising*'s use of darkness seems consistent with this murder, sexuality, the S & M men, and the police on patrol all being bound together in a cycle of behavior that is linked with disturbance and danger.

Yet what is particularly interesting here is the way "sexuality" is set against this. The noir world and its production of a sense of horror. There is no simple dichotomy between darkness and light, or black and white. Instead, the



Al Pacino (as Steve Burns) picks up two men dressed as women. *Cruising*

properties which characters like Burns and Captain Edelson (Paul Sorvino) might seem to represent especially in their first scene together when Edelson describes the dangers attendant upon Burns going undercover, are gradually and powerfully subverted.

The police in the film do not reflect any order against which to set the chaos of the S & M world — in fact, they are linked with repression, which is shown to produce corruption (the patrol room who terrorize homosexuals), impotence (Edelson, whose limp conversationally signifies a corruption, is powerless to act except in accord with the bureaucratic structure of his department) and brutality (again the patrol cops, but also the savage interrogation of the suspect who could have been executed by a simple pistol shot).

The film instantly draws connections



The New York City world of S & M. *Cruising*

between the police and the S & M underworld — both function and are related through a system of signs which includes handkerchiefs, uniforms and slang expressions like "night stick" (which actually links penis and baton), both have centres of activity marked off as precincts, both form an uneasy alliance in the attempt to find the killer each, becoming a disturbing mirror of the other. This can be seen especially in the presence of the patrol black, clad in job slacks, who saves the police with their interrogations. But a key motif of the film, that of the predator, binds the two worlds inextricably together. The ritual of the pick up finds its distorted reflection in the police who seek the S & M hangouts either as participants or as victims of the man hunt.

All this provides the framework for the "psycho" design whose centre is the character of Steve Burns. Having accepted the assignment to "disappear", he assumes an identity which allows him to mix with the crowd who inhabit the film's underworld, a process which mirrors that of the killer, Richards (Richard Cox), whose daylight "disappear" conceals his night-time existence. The film then produces, and sustains, a conventional picture of such "investigation" fiction in which pursuit and pursued success reflections of each other.

Throughout the film, the medium long-shot is used to create an uncertainty about whether we are looking at an image of Burns or of Richards (or of someone else altogether) and their similarities in dress and physique further accentuate the point. The sequence where Richards first notices Burns' presence outside the apartment house where he lives employs the shot-reverse shot to discourage a sense of these similarities, and the final confrontation between the two men extends this. As their eyes meet in the dimly lit stairway, the two men move off to their initial of battle, Burns now wearing Richards' cap. Dressed similarly and armed with identical knives, they face each other.

The ambiguity which results from this is usually linked with their common plight — both are seen as outsiders, or both act according to a complex code, but on opposite sides of the law. *Cruising* is no exception in this, but it shifts that ambiguity into the realm of sexuality. Burns and Richards find their self-image threatened by homosexuality — each lives in the shadows of their figures in whom they have something to prove, and in each case that something involves a rejection of their own sexual existence.

Burns is initially depicted as the canonical function of the cop-hero in a confrontational heterosexual. "There's a fat about you you don't know," he responds to his girlfriend Nancy's (Kathleen Allen) charge that he is being mysterious about his new assignment. This initial investigation is accompanied by the brutal music production of their own sexual existence that dominates the rest of the soundtrack.

However, as Burns penetrates further into the



Steve Burns (Al Pacino) and Richards (Richard Cox) before their final act of battle. *Cruising*



The copped Captain Edelson (Paul Sorvino). *Cruising*

foreign world of the black leather and single-clad homosexuals, what becomes clear is that there is a lot about *Cruising* that he doesn't know. His behavior becomes less assured, and when he returns to Nancy's place in the evening, the sexual rapport the two had seemed to share is replaced by that of his desperate hunger, and as the "lover's drive" in him the more is disavowed by more threatening forces. Only in the film's final sequence is it suggested that the best music has been coming from a rejected player in the livingroom, peering in the characters' agonies of romantic love, a notion which the entire film calls into question.

Burns returns to his undercover role each time heeds his behavior in an increasingly disturbed fashion, and his violent reaction to the gay neighborhood's linkup of him with "hot chicks" who frequent the S & M bars is clearly in name of the provocation. The severity of his actual identity has eroded, and the film's final sequence underlines the potential destructiveness of the resultant masculinity as it becomes a possibility that Burns himself is a new killer in the house.

The shift from the initial reading of Burns, as an authentic identification figure who is to lead us into the S & M world and who will thus provide us with a secure perspective from which to judge the action, produces a significant narrative disturbance in the film. Many of Alfred Hitchcock's films provide similar misadventures of audience response (nowhere more effectively than in the shift of response to the Scottie Ferguson/James Stewart character in *Vertigo*), but few films have disturbed the narrative position of the hero as so successfully as *Cruising*.

While the structure of the properties of the film's "normal" world, in his role in the police force and in his relationship with Nancy, Burns is not as uninvolved. He has his place and his function, and he can act across that. This is the world which, like the age, asserts order and possesses anything which threatens that. In the film's "other" world, in "discovery," merging with those around him in the night streets and bars, sharing a physical resemblance with so many of the S & M as that it often requires a close-up to recognize his place (so sure here) and to return order to the program of the narrative.¹ This is the world of the M, which asserts chaos, which is unrepresented, and thus dangerous. It is a world which produces inventory in those bound by the rigid re-direction of the "normal" world.

Cruising makes no claims to any sort of documentary realism. Its particular style draws on the tradition of detective realism, though it often seems that it is only doing so to break its rules. Its consistent subversion of the viewer's customary trust and secure position in relation to the clarity and order of the narrative underlines the film's central concern with identity. It is in the belief that it is most effectively a horror story, for it confronts the complexity that celebrates order and replaces it with the arbitrariness of chaos.

Formally and thematically, *Cruising* is a film which doubts and, as intelligence does not move more than the naive certainty that has surrounded it to date.

1. In many ways the narrative tells its story around it in a fully and most successful of the dominant narrative means, in which French realism is completely committed. For example (temporarily) in medical realism in the sequence where Richards meets his fellow in the police academy in his apartment, which is already located in a temporal time, he goes to his father. It is only later in the film that we learn that his father has been dead for 40 years and that his mother has changed his name in the legal register to the film where Burns meets to Nancy's apartment.



CRUISING 2

ADRIAN MARTIN

As a film about homosexuality, or a critique kind of homosexuality, *Cruising* is inevitably first for helping to the conventional cinema straighten out before seen that the leather sex, sadomasochism, pick-ups. This is not to say that straight are not "bored" that those of the charming, effeminate of his eyes are filled with never the rain. There is not a homosexuality, an essential homosexuality, anymore than there is an essential femininity or masculinity.

Homosexuality only exists in its different constructions, in different and cultural positions. It can never be separated from the meanings and connotations it carries. And it is in this light that I propose deciphering *Cruising*.

There is possibly a fundamental argument against the film (currently it has yet to be made). It might claim that *Cruising* study behavior and attitudes as cutting significance of gay sexuality as something dark, dangerous, abnormal, even evil, given the police style Frenchmen employ. And being it least minimally a police film, it presents film significance not to be constructed but an natural, comfort to the eye — "That's what the gay world is really like." People respond to familiar things in a familiar way, and thus *Cruising* becomes complicit with dominant ideology.

Although there is some validity to this position, it risks upon a presumption that I find impossible to work with: that we can know how average, ordinary, obsessive they are middle class, heterosexual men react to the film, what attitudes it evokes or bolsters in them. For the moment, the question of *Cruising*'s impact and its effects will be put to one side, and first we must understand the film itself.

Cruising is essentially about aggression. The claim, as Vito Russo did in *Gay Film*, that the film "indicates that gay life makes one violent" is no generic everything to do with who is being

victim and the possible reasons why. *Cruising* is not a right-wing cartoon warning against gay culture. It explains why gays are killed and why society has a need to kill them.

A few minutes into the film, two cops are shown traveling the streets as their patrol car. One of them, Robinson (Joe Spinell), talks about his wife who has left him: "She said I gonna make a fool out of me 'til you get this high." They are two cops dressed as women, pull them up and have them, the same cultivation in use of the cops ordering the most vocal gay to give him head. When this is about to happen, the shot racks focus to show the killer going into a bar to find a victim. What is going on here? Robinson's wife leaves him while he is directed towards the gay — because both homosexuals and "liberal" women pose a threat to the social and sexual order. What the film is about to do is only an extension of this first aggression, he is, particularly, on the side of the law.

Cruising examines a paradigm, or "phallosocial" society, in which the power asserted in men by the law expresses itself through a subordination of male sexuality, the penis. The film consistently links power with virility (the scene just mentioned, the gay is told to suck the cop's night stick, the harassing cops are called "hard-ons"), the film's aggression is explained in relation to its "shooting blanks".

However, it is not only the police who are implicated in the structure of virility and power. Certainly the most provocative aspect of the film is the way it calls it refuses to recognize its ways on any level: they are not presented as the pure victims of patriarchal tyranny. In fact, they help to perpetuate its ideology.

The whole "leather sex" scene is based on a glorification of phallic power — whereas the film regards the wearing magazines, and man is particularly the police uniforms. This is

Continued on P. 192

1. Cf. Richard Dyer, *Heaven and Homosexuality: The Police*, and Paul Williams, *Hot 1107*. Dyer's method of analysis presents a useful and useful overview to the narrative structure of a police film. See Paul Williams, *Gay Cinema: Crime Fiction*, No. 10 (1981) 175.

2. Cf. Don Froydenberg, *Homosexual Desire: Alfred Hitchcock's Film*. It should be said that this book, which has contributed to my critical position on *Cruising*, is not accepted by a majority of the Gay Movement.

The Equity Debate

No issue has been more heatedly debated in the Australian film industry than that of using overseas actors in local films. On the one hand, there are those who see internationalization as essential if our films are to be more commercially-acceptable overseas. Using foreign stars is one way of achieving this.

On the other, there are those who believe in maintaining a small, nationalistic industry which caters primarily for Australians. Its success depends on its difference from the "readmill" of American-type product.

While these opposing views have been held for some time, it was primarily action by the Actors and Announcers Equity Association of Australia that made the issues public. Up until 1979, the producer of each film made in Australia negotiated separately with Equity. That changed in November 1979 with the incorporation of the *Film Actors Award 1979*, which resulted from negotiations between Equity and the Film and Television Production Association of Australia. One thing the Award did was establish penalties for the use of imported actors: e.g., if a foreign actor is used, each Australian actor in the film receives a 25 per cent loading.

At its incorporation, the Award was generally applauded, but enthusiasm waned quickly when producer Tony Ginnane ran into problems with *The Survivor* and then producer-director Richard Franklin with *Roadgames*. In Ginnane's case, he wished to bring in four overseas stars. Equity, which gives a ruling to the Immigration Department as to an actor's spending, refused on the grounds that two of the four actors were not of "international standing".

Ginnane took Equity to the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, but Justice Robinson ruled that Equity had the right to determine "international standing" and Ginnane lost.

The *Roadgames* case was different, with Franklin claiming that the Melbourne branch of Equity gave him permission to bring in Stacy Keach and Jamie Lee Curtis, but the Sydney branch, after an objection was lodged by a Sydney actress, changed the decision.

But the real bone of contention was yet to come: Equity's "Defence of Employment Policy", also known as the "new policy". This bans the use of overseas actors in any Australian film with government money, except in "exceptional circumstances". Several producers saw the move as the death knell for a flailing industry, others felt it would ensure the continuation of a film industry of which Australia could be proud.

It is still too early to see what lasting effects the new policy will have, but already Ginnane, Australia's most prolific producer, has stopped working in Australia and the South Australian Film Corporation has threatened not to make any more films until the policy changes.

Given the importance of this and related issues, various people have been invited to contribute their views in this and future issues of *Cinema Papers*. Following are an interview with Kim Windt, assistant general secretary of Equity and its main spokesman, a statement by Enrol Sullivan, chairman of the F&TPAA (Ginnane division), and an interview with Edward Woodward, acclaimed British actor. Their views form part of an ongoing debate which may well determine the future of the Australian film industry.

Uri Windt

Uri Windt, assistant general secretary of the Actors and Announcers Equity Association of Australia, is the spokesman on Equity's policies in the feature film and television areas. Here he discusses with Scott Murray the philosophy behind Equity's recent actions.

What are Equity's principal aims?

Our concern is twofold: cultural and economic. Culturally, what we would like to see is something that genuinely reflects, and is in touch with, an Australian way of life — a "cultural exactness", to use Bob Ellis' phrase. Economically we are looking for an industry that, in one form or another, is financially viable; where there is no constant threat to its survival. We want a mechanism that assures the industry's stability, and a continuity of production.

What concerned us, and we saw this coming two years ago, was that the economic crisis lurking ahead would lead to economic compromise and, therefore, cultural compromise. We had seen this happen in a number of other industries, like in Britain and Canada.

In Canada, for example, there was \$100 million worth of film-making — that is 25 films — being made in 1979. But only three of these scripts were written by Canadians and only five or six of the leading roles were played by Canadian actors. In it is a transplanted American industry and it is unstable because the decision of whether it goes ahead is not made within the Canadian industry, but in New York or Los Angeles. It is not economically viable because it is not based on anything indigenous; it is similar based on the Canadian economy, not related to the Canadian consuming public. It is related to the American consuming public.

But Canada, throughout the U.S. and, historically, Canadian film-going tastes have been the same as American. Canadian films are not, as proud, of interest to Canadian audiences. Surely it is economically sounder to make the sort of films that Canadian audiences want to see, rather than the sort some people think they should see...

There is a quote in *Panorama* from the Canadian Minister of Internal Affairs regarding outrage at the fact that films are using Canadian locations where the street names have changed, and where New York yellow cabs have been imported into Toronto. The Government itself is saying, "This is outrageous".

This kind of economic suicide is all about the Canadian government subsidizing American multinational and American protectionist corporations. I suspect you are in danger of this with a film like *Patrick*, which is supposed to be grossing millions of dollars in the U.S., yet it is alleged that the net return to the Australian Film Commission is in the mere tens of thousands of dollars. It has ended up losing a leg and no arm for something else to be passing around.

That could be said of many films, such as *"Panic at Hanging Rock"*, which was sold outright to Italy for a small advance and grossed nothing. Perhaps it just reflects the experience in the film industry...

But *Panic at Hanging Rock* came at one point in the history of the industry, and Patrick's long way afterwards. It, at that stage, they didn't know what a business deal looked like there should have been some very serious bookshaving going on in the A.F.C. boardroom.

The second point you made — that we ought to give people what they want — is a very much akin to the argument that takes place about television. Why is it that there isn't more Australian content on television? Are people basically happy with what they are getting?

The short answer for 1981, and the best solution that I have found in relation to television, is to compare it to a supermarket, where you are invited to gorge yourself on a wide range of sandwiches. But while you have a choice of food, when you don't have a quality of choice, you are choosing from vaguely similar things. To that extent, it is not a reasonable option

that people have before them.

Now, the argument that says since Canadians don't know what's good for them, let's give them pigs. I find pretty hard to sustain on economic grounds which are the industry's.

That's not what they are using. They are claiming that the jump from what Canadian audiences have traditionally wanted to films which others say fit intelligently comes in Canada is too big for audiences to take. It requires a progression...

You will forgive me if I think that argument is false. It doesn't take into account a vast economic infrastructure where you have the celluloid and distributors in a vertically-integrated monopoly, able to pull on revenues overseas and a global set-up. Industries like the Australian and Canadian are knocking from the inside trying to get in. Chances are just as you are playing with limited disc, you are always one step behind the 3 ball.

It is not as if the Australians and the American industries are comparable. You are dealing with two machines trying to compete for a particular kind of market. One machine has a global set-up with global publicity and marketing resources and infrastructural resources, while the other battles on its own. To that extent, the kind of industry we have, which churns out 10 to 20 films a year, is just out of the race to compete with the major machine. We are trapped in terms of product.

Now, in reality, get an understanding and a feel for how the exhibitors and distributors respond to Australian films, you have to look at different modes of history. It is not a uniform history. In 1976/77, for example, when there was a fairly acute dearth of production in the U.S., Australian films were virtually responsible for the cash flow among the exhibitors in Australia. They were desperate, and so this buoyed Australian films were

shown. But as soon as that dearth of programming gave way to a flood, Australian films were shunted to one side.

Obviously the big American industry could dwarf the small Australian in an open-market situation. If it wanted to, but it does not seem why the two industries could link together? Take a film like *"The Blue Lagoon"*, which has so far grossed \$30 million in the U.S. It has an Australian co-producer, and is the sort of film Australia could make with American money. Would that not be a good thing for us to do?

I think we are rightly trying to reach a situation, where the industry as a whole needs to make a decision about its direction. There are two options. It seems to me. One is the concept of internationalizing the film industry. Larry Grossman and Richard Franklin represent that kind of streamer per excellence. They are quoted as wanting non-specific location type films and so on. They means wanting to compete with the American concept of film-making on its own terms — and, if you are really clever enough, to do it with their money.

Such a proposition could work, and it would certainly provide turnover and liquidity. But a world be very much akin to the Canadian and British experience — and there is a question mark about the long-term of that kind of industry.

The second clear option relates to making films that are genuinely authentic, with that "cultural exactness". I was talking about. They are authentic in that they touch on people's lives and experiences. My brilliant career does that and American audiences abruptly identify with it so much as Australian audiences — yet it doesn't lose its roots.

The option therefore argues that it is only films which are distinct and identifiably different from the American tradition that will give the Australian films a niche in the marketplace that makes it worth-

© Copyright by a speech, related to that in Australia film industry. Based on the 1980 Sydney Film Festival.



while for people to go across the street to see a different film.

Now, if the economics of sustaining the second screen exist, there is a reasonable scenario. You can control your destiny, because the sources of funds and the audience you are cultivating — being Australian — are there. You get a return on the effort that has been spent within the Australian community.

Now, is there going to be a hybrid? I am not sure. What producers are complaining about is that the private funds which supplement the public funds are becoming progressively drier. It is driving them to desperate means to try and get the balance of money to make up the budget. They would like us to believe that what they are doing is at good faith, which I don't doubt, and therefore, doesn't involve any fundamental compromise of themselves as the Australian filmmaking industry. But this is where the cruxic comes. "It is a fundamental economic and cultural compromise being forced on those producers."

When you look at some of the propositions that are put up to us, it seems to me that there are fundamental compromises. They are making a choice of which of these two options should take place and they have done this without any widespread discussion within the industry and certainly with no preliminary discussion with the group of people they are asking to make the most severe compromise, namely the actors. In this compromise for foreign money, lead roles are being sacrificed to foreign actors—none of these compromises by their inappropriateness.

Producers could also argue that they have been forced into compromise by Equity's new policy [see Box 1].

That's not true. What we have said is that there is a responsibility of filmmakers, spending within Australia, to the Australian community and to their fellow creative workers. That responsibility is

there no matter how they finance their film. But there is a double responsibility when they are using government funds, because it is taxpayers' money geared with a certain intent in mind.

In that sense, we have differentiated between government- and privately-funded films. As to government-funded films, we have said that we are willing to look at a situation which allows for "ex-

ceptional circumstances", where an overseas actor may be required.

There are three areas that concern us in regard to the use of imported artists: producers want to use more and more imports in any particular film, they want to use less and less consequential people, and make and more films are doing it. Out of 18 productions planned this year, seven intend to use imports. Our response was that

there needs to be an accountability for these decisions. They can't be allowed to happen *de facto*.

We went then faced with the dilemma of what sort of circumstances were acceptable as a base on which imports can come in. We held two meetings of our members, one in Sydney and one in Melbourne, which were well attended. Two things stood out, one is the need for a certain amount of flexibility, and the other is that people assumed being displaced by "crunch teams".

So, in considering these factors, we have looked at the prospect of saying that "exceptional circumstances" means (a) somebody can't play the role satisfactorily in Australia, or (b) somebody who is of genuine international distinction and merit. Now, to that extent, certain requests for certain actors have been met. I don't know if it is equitable at the stage, but the whole industry knows about Julie Christie. We have said "All right," and that sets the peg. We will have a look at each test as it comes.

Has Christie been approved under (a) or (b)?

Under the international distinction and merit qualifications. It was quite clear that it was a role that could have been played by an Australian — in fact, it had been offered to an Australian before being given to Julie Christie.

Is it not conceivable, though, that a director or producer has a burning desire to use a particular overseas actor? Yet, under your new policy, it would be difficult for him to use that person. Therefore, there is a compromise.

That is not what has been put to us. It is not a real proposition. The real proposition is that producers expect to using the big international star who will put bumps on seats. The problem is that they can't afford them. So there is a new game involved, called "Crunch a Young Star". Everybody says, "If only I could have got Richard Gere

Box 1: The New Policy

Equity's new policy, "Defence of Employment Policy for Imported Artists", states in part:

1. Rules

Equity will approve the importation of artists subject to the following:

- Where a film is wholly or partly funded by a Government Statutory body no imported artist shall be admitted except in exceptional circumstances.
- Where a film is privately funded Equity will approve the importation of artists subject to the following:
 - The Artist is of internationally recognised merit and ability. The criteria of judgement in particular, but not exclusively shall be an artist's track record as validated in his experience in at least five feature films in leading roles and good press and award winning record of work over a period of at least five years leading to the date of judgement.
 - An equal number of Australian artists will receive no billing.
 - Proportional national television funds shall be allocated on proportional merits.
 - The imported artist does no more than the film for which he/she is contracted.
 - The production company enters into an agreement with the UMG (MGMA) to the above conditions and/or employment (including no risk of pay) and
 - Where a film is produced under the terms of the award on a private fund all pay agreed artists but limited to any one film in all but the most exceptional circumstances.
- Television Programs: before then under clause 11, 12 and 13.

Equity will also look the importation of an artist when the following conditions are met:

- Any production funded solely by the ABC will not be permitted import in individual qualifications.
- The issue is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the use of an imported artist.
- No more than one imported artist shall be permitted except under exceptional or unusual cases.
- The artist is of international status.
- An equal number of Australian artists receive at least the same billing as the imported artist.
- The imported artist does no more other than the television program and
- The production company enters into an agreement with the Union (including to the above conditions) and to no of employment (including risk of pay).

These conditions are subject to the overriding proviso that Equity will not approve the importation of artists for Australian made, made overseas.



From screen to screen: Stephens and Mackinnon join Bell and Andrew Macfadyen in *Break of Day*

funds and has to pay principal as well as interest. Obviously the pressure on it is intense. But what we found the SAFC saying is it was that unless it could get an export in every production, it didn't intend continuing with film.

That's not an open-minded approach. That's not "We'll examine each film on its merits" and so on. That is giving an overall proposition that cuts across whatever project they are doing. Hence their ludicrous idea about converting *The Chub* into a film about soccer with Michael Caine.

I mentioned earlier historical errors. One of those was the various funding bodies' moving into only one aspect of the film industry leaving the other two key areas — exhibition and distribution — to different agencies. This has meant a fairly untidy marriage with the people who have been historically responsible for the death of the industry ever already. That people couldn't see the inevitable crunch of that situation coming seems to me extraordinary.

Yet when there has been a shortage of product from overseas, as in 1976/77, Australian films have been shown and done well. Surely that suggests that, to a degree at least, the exhibition and distribution network is interested in showing Australian films, if they think they can compete on the marketplace?

It is a question of choice. If they have a choice they won't. If they don't have a choice, then they will support the Australian film industry.

Again, you have to remember the historical context. 1978/79 was the aftermath of the television era. There was a great deal of nihilism and it was politically right to move in that direction. Also, they had been up before the Trade Practices Commission and got a fairly severe thrashing. To win their wage again, they had to be seen to be actively supporting the film industry. Coupled with that was the death of material from the U.S. So why wouldn't they be

involved in such a proposition?

Now that there is a choice, why wouldn't they get out of supporting the Australian film industry? Take these past two years. They released five, or was a six, films in the July-August period last year, in Sydney anyway. That is five or six films in the darkest part of the year. Well you could say that was an accident but they have released four or five films this year in exactly the same way. Now if that is not guaranteed to kill the Australian film in the marketplace, I don't know what is.

Could it not perhaps reflect on the quality of those Australian films?

It may. But a may also reflect pretty well on economic manipulation of the industry.

You mentioned government funding bodies moving into only one of three areas where would you like to see them move into distribution and exhibition?

That's a good question. I can't see the answers necessarily from where I sit. I don't have all the data in front of me. I really don't know how that you approach that situation.

It would seem to me, however, that without pretty strong government support, thereby providing additional infrastructure, it may not be possible. I don't know. But I certainly seem to me that it's reasonable to make a call to have a look at the government's strategies in regard to this. Previous calls have taken place. There was the Tardiff Board in 1971, which condemned the exhibition and distribution monopoly. So did the Trade Practices Commission, with the *Wentworth* decision.

I am not optimistic with the present federal government, but if you have a sympathetic federal government you have lots of concepts you can play with. The Labor Government, for example, had a council of decriminalizing those bureaucracy. This involved spreading their various offices throughout regional areas where new office

blocks and community centres would be built. And in those regional centres would be theatres, cinemas, community facilities and so on. Well that idea gone ahead, it would have provided an exhibition chain for the various government funding bodies.

As new technology enters the government funding bodies and statutory bodies might to be involved in quality control and access to them. One would be pay television, which looks like coming in. It is not a question of having pay television enter to the exhibitors/distributors on one hand, or to the commercial television proprietors on the other. We will be looking at the cable pay set up as a publicly-funded proposition, did one into which the film industry will have a direct contact.

A lot of what you propose is dependent on a continuing of government involvement in the film industry. The policy of bringing in more and more overseas sales has been justified, by some people, as being a necessary step in preparing for the time when Australia's government money stops. What's your reaction to that argument?

The new industry clubs in that substantial part as it somehow had, and doubly bad in the film industry. It seems important to piece that together in a false proposition, and I'll do that in two stories. One, film is a cultural form that each country ought to sustain in the way common amounts of money are used to sustain other cultural forms, like ballet and opera. I understand that the Australian ballet company has recently received a grant of \$2.75 million.

On top of that, film is a mass cultural form in a way other cultural forms are not. It is a portable part of a social package, and has a very distinctive role. Consequently, governments have a responsibility to ensure its ongoing survival. So there is no reason to be apologetic. In fact, a substantial ought to be seen as a right of the industry.

The other thing to do in this time of conservatism about government outlays is to look at what the industry wants the federal government. We feel there should be an increase in the levy that is imposed on the overseas remuneration of exhibitors and distributors. They are part of the industry, and they ought to make a contribution towards it. What the last figures I saw quoted involved a \$46 million surverve of which exhibitors and distributors were taxed 18 per cent. That's roughly \$5 million. That's roughly the government contribution towards the AFC.

If a levy ought to be imposed, the money from that levy ought to be pooled and re-invested into the industry, instead of going straight into consolidated revenue. That the AFC would cost the Government nothing. So when is the heavy price that the Government is paying for what is the greatest international prestige-winning showpiece?

Succumbing to the psychological terror of people saying that the Government won't subsidize forever, and that we must have economic viability cuts your throat in two different ways. Firstly, you diminish the Government's sense of responsibility towards the industry as a whole you make them feel free of their commitment.

Secondly by making the kind of cultural compromises that we are talking about — reducing public house, editions of regional grants — you also lose that international prestige-winning aspect of the Australian film industry.

Given that you feel there is a need for the industry to come together more — shoulder to shoulder as you put it — how would you go about doing it?

Two things. One relates to the surviving people here to the requirements of others. If nothing else, my policy has created a somewhat short circuit for good or bad, but people are at least trying to do what are involved in the film industry. As well, producers are



Sherie Smith in *The Blue Lagoon*, an Australian film co-produced by Robert Hughes for PBS, aired in Australia.

asking themselves, "Am I going to be laughed out of court with this silly proposition of I go into Export?" We are getting these meaningful negotiations as a result.

The second possibility is one of people getting together more, so that there is some sense of belonging to the one industry. Con-

sequently, we are proposing, if we can get state government permission, to create a celebration of the Australian-ness of the film industry at the next opening of an Australian film. We plan to close off George St and run the showbiz party of the year. At least it will provide people with an op-

portunity to celebrate what is good about the Australian film industry, rather than being its detractors with each other.

The Award (see Box 2)

Where did the initiative for the Award come from?

The film producers served a leg of lamb on us. They wanted to jump on work conditions to 80 hours a week, and halve the pay. I suspect it was an unhelpful claim, much like when we ask for \$3,000 a week.

Continued on P. 189

Box 2: The Award

The sections of the *Actors Feature Film Award 1978* relevant to this discussion are:

21. Rates of Pay

The award's table of pay shall be distributed in the following manner:

A. Process of categorisation

- (a) The producer shall, prior to engaging members of the Union, classify a theatrical production along the following:

B. Production details

- (1) A list of persons and/or companies and their residential status who will be granted credit or credits such as, but not limited to, producer, executive producer, associate producer, executive in charge of production, producer, script writer, production manager, production executive.
- (2) A list of persons and/or companies and their residential status who will be granted precedence in table such as, but not limited to:

"A _____ production "A _____ _____"

production presents a

_____ presents a film by _____

Production in respect of with _____

provided that the requirement does not apply to a Director, as a director and/or in respect of 1988.

- (b) Complete or guarantee, the nature of persons or companies and their residential status (persons whose applicable) the completion guarantee, and

- (c) Overseas work: the name and country of origin of all actors not residing in Australia and who receive salary other than living living at the conclusion of the film.

- (d) The producer shall seek approval from the Union for the major roles of this film to be worked in a film. Such roles must be of substantial distinction and shall be:

- (e) The producer and the Union may, by mutual consent, designate a specific category in the film notwithstanding the provisions of clause 21.1.

B. Category Definitions

Film shall be categorised as follows:

- Category A means a film with total Australian creative control and all applicable Australian completion guarantee.

- Category B means a film with total Australian creative control, overseas actor(s) and all applicable Australian completion guarantee.

Category C means a film subject to Australian creative control with some overseas actor(s) which overseas production personnel or company receiving production is presented on credits other than previous and having all applicable in Australia completed on guarantee.

C. Minimum Rates

The minimum rates of pay set out hereunder shall be paid by the producer to the actor:

(a) Category A

A. Actor/Actress

- (1) Engaged by the week _____ \$224.80 per week

- (2) Engaged by the day _____ \$83.50

- (3) Engaged by the hour for a minimum of four hours and not required to speak more than two lines of dialogue _____ \$9.50

(b) Category B

- (1) Engaged by the week _____ \$143.50

- (2) Engaged by the day _____ \$26.50

(c) Category C

- (1) Engaged by the week _____ \$161.50

- (2) Engaged by the day _____ \$42.10

(d) Director/Writer

- Minimum living of engagement as per sub-clause C of this clause.

(e) Rate

- (1) Engaged by the hour _____ \$6.95

- (2) A minimum of four hours _____ \$45.50

- (3) Engaged by the day _____ \$45.50

- Provided that when the producer is shipping a location, all equity agents from the availability of Actors and Directors Equity Association of Australia (hereinafter the "Union") in the Union's agreement, the following shall be paid:

- Country Rates _____ \$32.80

- Engaged by the day _____ \$32.80

(f) Category B

- Excepting in what is in Extra and Special, the 20 per cent add-on to the rates set out in paragraph (a) above plus 12 per cent for each additional imported actor after the first.

(g) Category C

- Excepting in what is in Extra and Special, the 40 per cent add-on to the rates set out in paragraph (a) above plus 12 per cent for each additional imported actor after the first.

- Provided that when the producer is shipping a location, all equity agents from the availability of Actors and Directors Equity Association of Australia (hereinafter the "Union") in the Union's agreement, the following shall be paid:

- Country Rates _____ \$32.80

- Engaged by the day _____ \$32.80

(h) Category B

- Excepting in what is in Extra and Special, the 20 per cent add-on to the rates set out in paragraph (a) above plus 12 per cent for each additional imported actor after the first.

(i) Category C

- Excepting in what is in Extra and Special, the 40 per cent add-on to the rates set out in paragraph (a) above plus 12 per cent for each additional imported actor after the first.

- Provided that when the producer is shipping a location, all equity agents from the availability of Actors and Directors Equity Association of Australia (hereinafter the "Union") in the Union's agreement, the following shall be paid:

- Country Rates _____ \$32.80

- Engaged by the day _____ \$32.80

F & TPA A Statement

Errol Sullivan, chairman of the Film and Television Production Association of Australia (features division), looks at the Equity debate from the point of view of the producer.

In some respects, Equity's policies on imported artists are not far removed from those of independent producers. We are certainly committed to the concept that films which have secured public investment (other than development moneys) should restrict, but not exclude, the use of foreign creative talent, including writers and directors as well as cast. Restrictions could certainly protect Australian content and maintain Australian creative control.

In addition, if some formula for restricting the amount of foreign talent in productions could be agreed upon, then producers would be able to package and finance films with some public investment, in a planned and organized fashion, provided Equity could see its way clear to let directors and producers cast their films without effecting creative control themselves by way of veto on who can work in Australia.

However, Australian films which are totally privately financed (a handful over the past five years) should not suffer any more restrictions than Hollywood location films shot in Australia, even if that means taking the film outside the ambit of the subvented award for Australian films. Tony Gernasek should be able to make international films in Australia in the same way that *The Hardship* was made here and that Warner Brothers may make *Thorn Beds* here.

Production, distribution, exhibition and marketing costs have risen sharply. Below-the-line costs have roughly doubled. Examples of our successes from the past, which are totally Australian, take on a different hue with today's cost structure when combined with diminishing box-office returns to all but the mega films. Yesterday's successes are now formulas for today's flops. Budgets have risen and films are, therefore, harder to finance from within Australia. Overseas finance or pre-sales can only be generated by projects with marketable elements in the key creative positions.

We have, in Australia, only a small number of directors and cast that can be used to help finance a project in this way. Production will continue to fail if we don't bolster our investment packages with a restricted use of overseas talent and, at the same time, recognize that this talent may be virtually unknown in this territory.

If producers are unable to use foreign talent, then only low-budget features will be made so that they can be financed from within Australia. This will mean a different type of production.

If commercialism is to be a criterion for some production which involves public funds then Equity's policy will restrict this production to low-budget, exploitation films which will star banks of flesh and spectacular car crashes rather than a mix of Australian and foreign performers in films which could have significance for a wide audience.

With an increasing tendency in lower budget, commercial films to generate explosions films, then notions inherent in Equity's position, that if the film is all-Australian it will better represent Australian values and culture (whatever that means), seem untenable. Is *The Last Wave* with Richard Chamberlain less Australian than *Mad Max*? Were the scores of spaghetti Westerns (with all Italian content) representative of Italian culture?

If Equity's policy is designed to redirect public money from commercial investment in Australian films to a cultural subsidy, then Equity should say so. Producers support a mix of public investment, which promotes commercial mass audience film production as well as continued and increased investment in low-budget films with narrower audience aspirations, which would also provide opportunities for new talent. Such a mix of production will maintain jobs and keep the public money flowing.

Any contraction to the sole production of subsidized art films will quickly produce an elitist production industry, serving an elitist audience. As production continues to drop, Equity's policies will mean more and more from a defence of employment to an attack on employment, and not just for its membership. ■

Edward Woodward

Most of the debate over the use of foreign actors in Australian films has centred in Australia. But how do overseas actors feel about the issue?

In this frank interview, by Tom Ryan, leading British actor Edward Woodward discusses working in Australia and his concept of the international actor.

How did Bruce Beresford come to choose you for the part of Harry Mawdsell?

Bruce had seen a lot of my television work and the film *Walker Man*. He felt I was the one to play Breaker and put the idea to Matt Carroll who agreed. They then found that I had this extraordinary resemblance to the man which spread them on even more. I was then onto the script.

Did you accept it that point?

No. The script wasn't finished and I think there is a great danger in accepting anything until you have seen the final form. Other was you can make terrible personal mistakes. Soon afterwards Bruce sent me a draft which was much closer to the final one. I thought it was great.

What sort of director is Beresford?

The keynote of his direction is with all the good directors I think, is that he encourages you to contribute to the part even to vary the way it is written. He is a very clever director and can achieve an almost unspoken rapport with his actors. He only has to move his finger before he says something, and you immediately know what he is talking about. His communication with actors is an absolutely perceptible.

Your style of acting is that of a reaction, rather than of an initiator of dramatic action. That is especially true of "Breaker Mawdsell", where one thinks of that image of you looking up at Jack Thompson as he speaks. Initially there is cynicism, but that changes to affection and support in the course of the shot.

I am glad you got that because it was very important to my mind.

I was trained in the school of reacting and in fact, acting is about reacting. That is the most realistic last thing actors should be taught.



You yourself are very much concerned in this film, but I think to be honest, it is a film that is about people, not about you. It is about people, not about you. It is about people, not about you.

It was like the really top actors and watch their reactions and watch them learning. It is all a version of not pretending to listen but actually listening.

Obviously the techniques of an actor are developed over the years and vary for different roles. One wouldn't see that sort of technique for instance in a television comedy series. There you have to look at it all the time with as few perfect lines as you can get.

One thing that has struck me about Australian films is the absence of

script has to be good in the first place.

In the last scene in "Breaker Mawdsell" you say very little. In fact, it is Jack Thompson, Bud Tingwell and the others who do the talking. Yet it is your reaction that seems to control our emotional response to what's going on. Were the scenes directed around you consciously?

Material is the catalyst. It is the reason the whole thing is going on in the first place. He is a very clever man, so of course, you show the brevity through that man through his reactions. Judicious reaction shots provide the thread of tension throughout the scenes in the courtroom. This is the chance of the director.

There were of course other reaction shots, but they only came out of what an actor was doing. A director watches a rehearsal, sees the way a particular actor is reacting to somebody else, and thinks, "Oh good, that tells my lot of the story here so I'll get that reaction shot." This builds up into a picture which is the film. All I do as a film actor is listen.

I spent 18 solid days of listening in that courtroom, but that was my job. You don't stop acting because the camera is not on you especially in a scene or a series of scenes which is very tense and building inexorably to a final, great five-minute take, which is Jack's appeal to the court.

The more you talk about acting and reacting the more I know that what I was taught is true: that it is all a question of reacting or listening, being not just for yourself but for all the other actors. What you do on set or on a stage, is only a part of the whole. If you go out and see "This is my show" or "I am the great I am", you already have destroyed whatever is going to happen. You have totally destroyed the writer, the director, all the other actors and yourself. That is not what I am about, that is not what actors are basically about.

Occasionally you get the odd, twitty big head, build a very simple



Brook Benton (left) talks Edward Woodward for a scene in *Breaker Morant*.



Lee White (left) talks Paul Giamatti. Henderson (right) speaks to Howard (Woodward) for a scene.

to deal with people like that. You do nothing, and the more they do, the less you do. Finally they disappear up the rear end of the world and you are left quietly on that stage, just being there. And that is basically what it's all about — just being there and allowing everybody to do their thing.

Was there any discussion on "Breaker Morant" about the dangers involved in opening the film, its following the flashback to materialize out of the narrative?

There was no discussion as such because when Bennett came to the project he had already mapped out the overall plan. What do you do with a courtroom drama? You have to go outside the court. How do you go outside the court? Well you obviously do it in flashback at Brisbane and vice.

In *Breaker Morant*, you have a narrator, whereby you go backwards and forwards at times. The director's great problem there, of course, is to make sure that the audience is swept along by the story, and that can only happen if the audience understands where it is at any given time. And that is where I think the genius of a man like Brook Benton comes into play.

I kept thinking throughout the film that maybe it shouldn't have moved outdoors all the time. Perhaps the act and sequence would have been more convincing had the film been claustrophobic to that point.

Yes, but the vast number of people who watch entertainment do not go to the theatre. Therefore you have to deal with the kind of capital as they are going to bring to your film. Today's audience are not trained to feel that kind of claustrophobia.

You are a man who goes to the theatre a lot, therefore you know the genre. You have the feeling for the film. The audience which go to films are used to being taken outdoors. Today in the age of outdoor location filming

The International Actor

You are probably aware that Actors Equity in America has a policy directed at excluding overseas actors, so far as possible, from Australian productions. What is your attitude to this?

To start with all Equity groups are only the union total of all the actors. And whatever Australian actors decide, will be done.

I speak as an actor rather than as an Englishman or an Australian and I don't give a damn if I offend anybody. I have been lying for years, and years, along with a number of actors in Australia, the U.S. and Britain to have this true internationality of actors recognized, documented and accepted and put into our rule books. Great talk, over the years this has begun to happen. Unfortunately, our Equity talks in American Equity, in American Equity, well, talk to American Equity. For instance, I know. Don't forget, there are few places in the world that English-speaking actors can work. And gradually, it seems to me, we have been making waves in the international arena to a true exchange. If there is a hard-felt fact, then there is not a doubt in my mind that it will produce a total catastrophe.

Theoretically it's not a bad thing. An overseas actor can be treated as a film, with permanent filming, in "international circumstances." The cost is an filmmaker to show that nobody in Australia could play that part, and that the overseas actor is really a star.

But there is no way you can prove these things. There is no way you can prove that an Australian can't play a great part, or that an English or American actor could play a part. Actors are actors, and are therefore called upon to play all sorts of parts. We are not particularly good actors if we can't play all sorts of parts.

I hope from what you say that there is no conspiracy, stone-wall but because that will produce a non-union in Britain, no Australian actors will be allowed to work in Britain, and there are a great number of Australian actors working in Britain right now. Good news, important, no Australian actors will be allowed to work in films in the U.S.

Over the past five or six years, there has been a long list of a breed of Australian actors, second to none in the world. Now whenever such actors existed that craft! Obviously, no Australian actors will want to make films in the U.S. They will want new experience, new types of scripts, new directors, etc. Yet there is no way of any Equity coming up with a hard-and-fast line, without things being taken on the word of a particular situation that the Americans are going to say, "We don't mind not being allowed to make films in Australia. Of course we will welcome you Australians into the U.S."

So we will find the situation where our countries are totally closed to the possibility of actors being able to move about. And actors are the most mobile of all.

A part of the history of film with movement of actors from one country to another into films. Sometimes it's going to be Australia, it's not the country that's making films, sometimes. God willing it will be Britain's. I don't know. All hard and fast, but actors are important because of fear and are totally mobile and free.

Equity is there to protect each of us in our separate countries. It has to protect a very delicate situation at a time when unemployment is rife. Of course it is in obligation to protect, but I don't see how, as a negotiator, but can protect. And actors who want to spread their wings and learn more about their craft. It can't possibly work for the good of Australian actors.

I think there is something about actors. It is often declared by Aus-

tralian filmmakers that they need an overseas star, finally to get investment, and secondly because without a particular overseas star the film will not be marketable, or at least as marketable, in overseas countries.

Well I wouldn't know very much about that side of the business, but are reaction to that a bit of a cliché, griffe and poppy-cock. That is not my reason for challenging any sort of conspiracy about actors.

I have travelled all over the world and have worked and talked with many actors. Actors are our life, acting is my love. I know, perfectly well that 90 per cent of the actors I have talked to over the 15 years I have been an actor, have been saying not for a moment, why, we can work in such and such a country without understanding the indignities actors underwent.

I am angry, in retrospect for the Australian actor, because up to 10 years ago the country was and still is, essentially, it is, by a few actors from Britain, and the odd one from the U.S. to make a killing.

They came back to make a packet, and then got the hell out of the country. That has happened in our country too, in the days when Australian men came over to Britain and British singers and dancers could not get work for years after war. I understand that sometimes only one will stay that does not even now.

I came to Australia because I am asked to do a play on a concert tour, as this particular case. I am in Australia because it interests me as an actor. I must show actors and other people, and I see a marvelous and beautiful country.

It is great to be able to work in another place. I don't come out here to make money, because I can make a hell of a lot more money at home. I am not asking you to keep about that. I am merely telling you why I am and a number of other British actors came out when invited and when persecuted.



PHILIPPINE CINEMA HOLLYWOOD OF THE PACIFIC

Iran A. Shkedi reports on the film industry in The Philippines, a country for long in the shadow of its one-time colonizer, the U.S., but now showing a fierce independence. This is reflected in much of its cinema, particularly the films by award-winning director Lino Brocka

Manila lies about 8° north of the equator, so it is hot most of the year. But it was early spring when I arrived: the terraces were flooding through, and every night the Luzon, the large park in the center of a modern local city, was packed with people enjoying the mild weather.

In his only office, Eddie Romero was putting the finishing touches to the promotion campaign for *Agapita*, his latest film. It is the most expensive film made in The Philippines, with a budget of almost US \$1 million. It is also the first effort in recent times at a national epic: a film which spans four generations and looks at the experiences of an important family through many different periods in Filipino history.

Romero has been making films in The Philippines for nearly 40 years — for local release and an audience for American producers — so the technical aspects of film don't worry him too much. His main concern, as for any producer, is whether a film will take at the box office — and seeing he wrote, directed and produced the film, he has more at stake than most. But Romero is relatively unbothered as he organizes the many previews which will provide the launch of his film.

Agapita is just one of the 200-odd local films that roll out of the Philippine labs each year, and which compete for the three or four playdates a week for films in the local language. Tagalog (sometimes English, but beautiful Tagalog) is an amalgam of Malay root words and some Spanish, with a remarkable ability to incorporate English-American phrases and constructions.

Philippines are filmgoers. There are more than 1000 cinemas in the three main island groups, and the total admissions a day throughout the island is slightly less than two million. Of these, about 90 per cent are in locally-produced films, and in certain areas 40 per cent never see a foreign film. So, it is a buoyant market, hardly dented by the impact of television and steadily loyal to the local product.

The Government's attitude to the film industry is social as well as financial: when it reserves the right to be shown all scripts before production (and other cuts and changes), and also collects a hefty 30 per cent tax on box-office receipts. Various incentives are fed back to producers, but the industry is very much self-supporting and exists without subsidy.

Recently, however, financial lines have become strained, and other sources of low-scale finance have had to be hunted for. Large finance companies have joined the fray, and one big company has made a long-term commitment to investment in production and distribution. *Agapita* is one of its major investments, but was seen as a last leader, initially at least. These pessimistic approaches were already being proved wrong when I left Manila.

Other sources of finance are the stars themselves usually by deferring of fees in

return for a big part of the box-office take, and investment by theatre owners who usually turn out to be Chinese entrepreneurs making high return gambles for their one release.

Although every effort is made to secure overseas release, either by a general appeal or to Filipino minority groups in other countries, these efforts have not been successful. Filipino films have not so far won world interest, although organized efforts are being made by *Panteo Records*, a French publisher-director. To get the films of Lino Brocka to the European festival exposure (See interview with Brocka on p. 128) has never seemed too remote, but I find the feeling that this resistance to Filipino films was seen as a form of racism by the Western countries.

Having now seen a fair selection of quality Filipino films, I feel they can establish an audience overseas, aided by a certain European quality in the style of relationships and spiritual settings. But the market needs to be proved and this will require some investment and a lot of patience and persistence. *Agapita* may be the film to spearhead a Filipino entry into European and international markets.

In many ways, The Philippines can be seen as an enclave of European colonialism in Asia, while sharing the ethnic conditions and lifestyles of the South-East Asian area. Providing that world interest in films continues to about the same level, it seems that Filipinos have the talent and expertise to supply international films. Co-operation with other Pacific nations would seem to be an obvious possibility.

So, if one were to define Filipino mass entertainment, it could be referred to as a mass culture. There is a large population of unperpetrated culture and 'ethnic' cultural pursuits. But the scene is of amalgam and adaptation in which the total population changes. According to a recent report from The Philippines Motion Picture Association, filmgoing is more or less constant across the entire social scale (it averages about 90 per cent attendance films regularly), although the A and B groups (the rich) show more preference for foreign films than the C, D, E and F groups (the rest), who prefer local language product. So, in a country of diverse and divergent people, films probably draw more than any other cultural medium to weld the country into a social unity.

In the main, though, there seems little evidence of a concept of art cinema, at least in terms of audience loyalty. Some obvious pre-war evidence in it, but a filmfest experience in the 1970s proved the ability of making films for which there was no substantial audience. And most of these directors have returned to commercial production, where they do quite well on a pay scale of 50,000 to 100,000 pesos a film (about \$6000 to \$12,000). Sometimes, due to conflicting bookings of the stars, production may stretch to 18 months, but to paraphrase Samuel Johnson's

statement on marriage, commercial producers may have many pains, but independence has few pleasures.

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A few days after I arrived in Manila, the price of major film was lifted 30 per cent to 4.50 pesos a litre. This is slightly more than 50 cents Australian, but in a country where wages are a fraction of that it is a punishing blow. The forewarned film stock price increases had also risen 25 per cent. So it is no wonder that on most issues the picture is a luxury, all rights are in black and white. Old films from East Germany, and second-hand ones, are done up to re-used stock, averaging about a price a foot.

Import restrictions on equipment have always been stringent, and the basic shooting kit is an Arriflex or BNC, sometimes in a heavy blimp, with a motor, tripod and lights in home-made housings. Editing equipment is no less spartan, with old Moviola predominating. Every editor lives in hope that a passing American company will leave behind a blimp for his company to buy. But the second-hand ones are adequate and the moving yards have the latest Magnasynch equipment. Similarly, the LWN Shima processing equipment, designed and staffed by Film Lab of Sydney, seems to be operating satisfactorily.

Post-production is always done in a rush, usually to meet a playdate negotiated a few days before. Some houses offer a complete post-production package, with editors, editing rooms, sound insertion, mixing and everything but the opening tape thrown in. This seems like a bargain when you are told that the adstar also does the sequencing, is just that optimum condition. The old Australian myth of the foreman on the rigging is no exception: fast in Manila. Sparkles, scribbles and cement splice wires flash past the screen on all productions, even something as big as *Agapita*. Editors, to make money in an insecure and underpaid role, often take on as to seven post-production contracts, working all-night stints to get through.

However, there are specific problems in a high-volume, low-margin industry, and one should not sit back with a tearful smile. Filipino films have helped to create and certainly survive adequately a vast and loyal public. Most producers, to cover overheads, have to produce at least three films a year, so they do their best to make things. What this means is that the average Filipino producer probably makes five to six films on the finance. Australians would use to make one film of the scale of *Caddyshack*. In addition, the Filipino producer probably negotiates a staff of four or five full-time with additional work for literally hundreds of actors, artists and technicians, not to speak of lab and theatre staff.

The image of the Australian producer getting one or two films every two years then asking to see off waiting for prompts or a nod from the

venous corporations or commissions before he or she starts another project, it is well understood. Australians can learn a lot from the Filipinos, and Asians in general, about effective capital utilization. The cost-effective use of our very heavy investment in technical equipment would be one clear advantage.

Rubella Velasco, executive secretary of the PHPPA, invited me to a shoot of a film starring one of The Philippines' biggest "bold" stars, Nora Aunor. The location, he warned me, was a squatter village near the center of Manila. It was a night shoot, so we set out at around 3 p.m., through the miserable maker of Manila's rush hour, in every one of its 80,000 jeepneys (populated passenger vehicles that ply for hire) seemed to be on the road, its doors lights flashing, its stereo blaring out rock music, chrome gleaming in the setting sun.

In about 30 minutes we were at the location. A crowd of about 100 men and women gathered around a small frame house, waiting for a glimpse of their favorite female star. They gazed with excitement as they saw her at a window, and surged towards the fence.

Shooting hadn't started, the director was not there and the camera crew were setting up lights. Velasco explained that shooting rarely starts in Manila before one o'clock in the afternoon.

The stars, who are essential for the success of most films, know their power and can refuse to get up at the morning. So shootings are tactfully scheduled to suit them, not the budget. And, as was the case of the film we were seeing, the star was also the producer, so late hours just could be saved.

Nora Aunor gets a minimum of 300,000 pesos a film (\$37,500), which is a small fortune by any standards, and since she may make three or four films simultaneously, with an average of four weeks shooting each, stars are very well rewarded for their "star" status. Sports are, of course, simple, low-risk insurance, rather than film through the crucial first week when it must take money or be put off. The stars, in their mutual relationships with the public, and therefore the exhibitors, are the kings and queens of the Philippine industry.

Finally, with a full-fledged roar of excitement, Nora Aunor appeared, the director, Leo Roa, beamed, materialized and shooting began. Documentary by Australian standards, the equipment seemed adequate, with the possible exception that the camera was completely unbalanced and no attempt was made to record inside sets. Lighting equipment was also sparse and, although a generator was in use, the lights output was very low. It was further diminished by use of bounced light from poly sheets and a lack of basic lighting tools that Australians would find essential. Lighting 50 ft and the general ambient lighting level was achieved more by careful placement than power. By about 10 p.m. a shot was in the can, and it looked like being a long night.

At 6 p.m. the following Friday night, in a large hall which was really a canteen, two passionate groups had been set up for the first preview of *Agila*. About 1000 students from various colleges and universities watched the three-and-a-half hour film unrolled. Despite help from Velasco, the Tagalog dialogue was impossible to me, the seats hard and the proposition unappealing. However, the audience watched with rapt attention. This was something new for them, too. Later, Romero gave me a copy of the script, and I found it good, with witty dialogue, a nice pace and definite unwillingness to show any of the usual American economic imperialism.

the pre-marital law period, sex and even street in large and powerful families.

The performances were good, ranging to excellent, and the photography (by several winning cameramen Mike de Leon) often superb. On a detail like status-up and character continuity left some room for concern, and some faults are likely to offend in the industry. Large scenes were included with care, and a most battle between looks (Jennifer Aguirre) and the Japanese was a tour de force. Similarly, the depiction of Marxist society, and a minority group of orphans, was handled with a great deal of sensitivity.

Where Filipino films was over many Anglo-Saxon ones in their sheer depth of personality, the recognition of personal motivation and character, in performance and script, so that the character is presented in his or her milieu, with full subtlety and characterization. The performance in *Agila* are no exception: the characters live and breathe, and there is little posing.

The majority of Filipino films, of course, do not possess such integrity. Many are straight exploitation films, on familiar themes of crime, prostitution and fantasy/escape.

A few nights later I attended a preview of *Miss X*, a creditable attempt to show the plight of Filipino women in Europe who are lured into prostitution. Shot entirely in Amsterdam on a low budget of 1,800,000 pesos (about \$178,000), it starred the famous "bold" star, Vilma Santos (and for very decent and intelligent scenes). (See interview p. 240.) Vilma not only has looked film here in dramatic rape scenes with a Dutch actor. But the production does neither her nor the best of current script justice. The low-budget restrictions, the technical inexperience (once again in the area of lighting) and poor coverage by director Gil Portes lay down a heavily visible concept. Yet no doubt the loyal fans of Miss Santos will gather in crowds to see this loose offering, which at least has the merit of dealing with a social problem.

Earlier, I had seen a shoot of another of Santos' many partly starring roles, in a sentimental drama called *Miss Jones*, directed by veteran producer-director Cirio Hergueta. In the





Above: Romero's *Agila*, which has set box office records in The Philippines. Left: a typical short-renter television show.

scene I saw. Santos (playing a doctor who has made it) visits the aging woman who waited for him on the road to war. Once again the shoot started at 5 p.m. (Santos suffers from insomnia) and after a fairly quick lighting set up — a couple of angles including a short dolly in — the hospital scene was over. The director was happy. And Santos stayed calm and composed through it all.

Watching the execution of this type of product, it is hard to escape the conclusion that such films merely feed the mass of an insatiable audience which is quite content to see their favorite stars (supported with all the fervor of football hares) in some sort of vehicle.

Well, Hollywood films in the 1940s and 1950s were certainly like that, and movie is building a new system to support their local industry, the Philippines have known the lesson well. The industry is further supported by an endless stream of celebrity shows on television (by my account there were at least three a day), unrelenting advertising by newspaper, radio and billboard, and diversification into video and music business (as you'll see). In other words there can be an entertainment Gilded Age. But Manila is in its thiries.

So it was not surprising to encounter the many and varied references to film culture, in

meetings, discussions and surveys, and the recognition of a need to develop a Filipino character through the medium of film. The artistic concerns, whatever their realization are in the function of discussion. Filipino producers are generally concerned with improving the cultural value of their product, and the many bottles sought with the Board of Censors to extend the range of permitted expression seem in part aesthetically motivated.

Leo Munka, a stage-oriented director, has fought a personal battle to make films about the great men of Filipino life. If this means showing them confident, exploitation and inequality, then Brooks has the determination to push his vision at the risk of censorship or outright ban. Other directors also see the need to propound social messages in their work and express frustration at the censored pressure to stay on the light side.

However, there are encouraging signs, largely as a result of representation to the First Lady Imelda Marcos, by the PMPPA. There are also moves to re-constitute the Board of Censors with fewer related industry men (at last count there were seven generals and colonels) and more diverse makers with a film background.

♦ ♦ ♦

Other events in my week story included another preview of *Agila* as it gathered momentum for its playdate, and a visit to the

well-equipped studios of LVN, owned by the de Laos family.

LVN used to be the biggest of the local language production companies, it was started in 1947 by a woman known affectionately as Dona Soaring. At its height, it employed 2000 people, produced a steady total of 26 films a year for more than 30 years, and applied strict standards of behavior to its stars.

LVN evolved into a large family of performers, stars, technicians and producers, who saw many tangible results for their efforts. In 1971 it ceased production, continuing its business by leasing facilities and offering full laboratory and post-production services. In 1975, it re-entered production when the grandson of Dona Soaring produced his first film, *Itan*, which won the Asian Film Festival award for Best Film in 1978. Since then it has produced another film by Mike de Laos, and is about to go into his third.

Like studios everywhere in the world, LVN suffers a continuing battle against rising costs, the increasing value of real estate, which will be in demand for shopping complexes or housing, and the increasing production for location shooting. However, a large part of de Laos's new film will be shot on a set to be built on the one sound stage, and a profitable commercial production agency, also run by the family, takes up the slack.

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Other interests took me south for a few days, so I missed the opening of *Agila*. Eddie Romero was behaving modestly when I saw him next, and it seemed like the whole industry had heaved a sigh of relief. *Agila* had started well, and was set to become the biggest-ever Filipino box-office success. Already it was surpassing *Morotrot*, the season's best film.

The proponents of quality films for the Filipino market have scored one important point: people will go to see a long film of high quality even if they have to pay more for it (I guess we go around one peso a ticket — this is like expatriate Americans in my father's time to see a musical film). Romero was about into pre-production for his next film (*A Little One* — he named me) and a wealthy financier had turned up at the last preview.

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On my last night in Manila I was invited to a board meeting of the PMPPA. In the momentary luxury of the Club Filipino, a sort of 10th Century realization of Somerset Maugham's wildest fantasy, I urged a local hotel owner the board welcomed their new lady president, Madame Macula. In a speedy and decisive meeting the outgoing president, Joseph Lirio, handed out his successors from the President of The Philippine Association for the Advancement of Cinema (the Producers and Directors Guild of Australia could well adopt — and the evening business began).

High on the list was the business of theatre bookings. Local producers were getting a bad deal. One in existence had booked a film, they often had to make a week's progress — in no time publicly. Any delay in the release incurred a penalty, payable to the exhibitor. However, there was no reciprocal compensation if any exhibitor didn't open a film on an agreed date. To make things more equitable, it was suggested that the penalties to producers should be cut.

Also, I decided to release *Itan* through the PMPPA's National Committee. That way the producers could get the advantage of collective bargaining. All this was decided after 10 minutes' discussion, a decision that will probably take the Australian industry 10 years to arrive at, collectively. ■

PHILIPPINE CINEMA

LINO BROCKA

Lino Brocka is a young Filipino director whose films have won a considerable following in Europe, with screenings at many international film festivals. This year *Jaguar*, the story of a security guard who finds himself in trouble with his bosses, was shown in the Cannes Competition and his previous film, *Manila - Claws of Darkness*, at the Melbourne Film Festival.

Brocka's latest film, *Perik Healer*, is the story of an addicted film fan who falls in love with a big-gert actor. Like several of his earlier films, it has run into trouble with the Board of Censors, which disapproves of his dealing with lower-class life and poverty.

In this interview with Ian Dicks, Brocka begins by talking about his views on drama, and in particular his training of actors.



Last actress Nora Aunon and director Lino Brocka during the filming of *Perik Healer*.

An acting style, if it is to emerge, must be related to local culture and behaviour. Films in this country are being made in a realistic and otherwise style, and to develop this style I arrange a number of workshops in the theatre.

First, I get the actors to do a play as if for the stage, and then for the camera. Finally, we videotape it. In this way, my actors learn to adjust or tone down their style for the benefit of films.

Through my activities as director, I also hope to develop an audience for a truly national theatre. So far the efforts have been successful, with all our sessions of short plays on local themes getting uniformly audiences. Often there are queues around the block before a performance.

Theatre is very important because it can study and attack contemporary issues through historical staging and imitation. Films can't do this because they are under much more intense scrutiny [from the Board of Censors].

All your films are set in slums. Why is that?

I must make films about rich people in rich settings because the budgets won't allow it. It is hard to find extras who can look rich; professional models have to be

hired at 500 pesos a day. Consequently you can't afford many, and this means you can't film a large party. Again, I am filming in the slums.

Your recent film, *"Jaguar"*, apparently had some difficulty seeking

the Cannes Film Festival...

Yes. I had trouble getting *Jaguar* to Cannes, so I went to the appeals committee and said, "What you are asking is the physical city, and it embarrasses you. You are not trying to see the humans that are my films. That's what I am trying to show. You are missing the soul of the film."

What I wanted to show is how the man, because of his background, has so many problems in trying to get to the top. Really, I was trying to make a positive statement about life.

Why did you form your own production company with other producers and directors?

We wanted to make commercially successful films, so we attached ourselves to some businessmen who provided half the capital. In the end, we let the busi-



The crew runs during a break in filming.



Scene from *Jaguar*, one of Brocka's earlier films.

occurred run the company and in two years we were in considerable debt. The company then failed, and I have since been making films once after the other to pay off the debt.

Producers now get in touch with me to write and direct films, so in one sense I am back where I started seven years ago. I am offered a project with a certain star combination and, if I like it, I take it on. I then put together with my writers, whom I have trained, in a week or so I have a sequence breakdown, and if that is okay we go ahead and finish the script in another two weeks.

These films are not blockbusters, and with rising costs we can't afford any delay. We do everything to cut down the cost of production, and this means a lot of preparation and rehearsal. This particular film will cost \$50,000 pesos, which is really low. We'll finish shooting it in two to three weeks, followed by another two to three weeks for post-production, dubbing and music.

Do you see the survival of cinema in The Philippines based on high volume low-budget films, or bigger-budget films?

You can make big films if they are pre-sold first. One idea is to make films that are recommended for schools, and which students are required to see. I did one four years ago and it made \$1 million pesos. So, I'd like to try it again.

I like to make small-budget films that are strong on content and acting, but which never lose track of the commercial side. People will think that I make films to win awards and not to make money. It is stupid. I make a film because I know it will make enough to recover the capital.

On my present film, I told the producer I would do it for half my salary, and that it would only take the whole half if the film recovers the money spent on it. And to get

back that capital, I'll try to get the film into a foreign market. But no matter what, I'll keep to the budget of \$50,000 pesos.

What is very important is that we develop an audience for Filipino films, so help them to discriminate and accept better things in life. You can't develop an audience by just giving them fantasies and escape films. I want to make films that will somehow put up a mirror to them and help them make up their minds about their values.

Producers like to think that their audience is stupid. They say, "This is a stupid film and it made money." Therefore, the audience is stupid. So they give audiences humor based on deformity. They also say that my films disturb people — sure they do. I want to confront people with reality.

What is your opinion of Australian films?

Australia is a middle-class country, rather more than a little biased. It projects a neutral ambivalence. The technical polish of your films shows that there is a lot of money in training and teaching people — certainly, we don't have that here. I watched a class at the Australian Film and Television School studying the lighting of a living room, and they had terrific equipment and everything was perfect. But I would check myself against being too correct and proper.

When I make films like an amateur, we are looking all the time to see if it is right, and the films have a particular flavor that I'd like to preserve. You can lose that vitality when everything is too precise and too schooled — as in acting.

Right now we are looking for a national identity. We are lucky that we have all these influences, and out of it we'll come something that is distinctly our own. We try to choose the best of all the world. ■

MANUEL DE LEON

Manuel de Leon, father of the young director Mike de Leon, has been involved in film production for many years. Although his company stopped production 20 years ago due to Leon family still owns industries, studio equipment and facilities, and one son runs a large Film, a commercials company.

Today Manuel de Leon's main interests are construction and real estate, which form the basis of his company's income. He is also a founder member of the Asian Film Festival.

De Leon begins this interview, conducted by our *Stocks*, by discussing the change in judging patterns at the AFF in recent years.

Rivalry has always been very keen, even from the early days. But the original format was that two delegates from each country would be chosen to judge, they were supposed to be men of stature and not persons.

Recently, however, everything has changed due to the machinations of producers who want the prestige. Australia has recently entered and my friend, John McQuinn, is trying to see if we can improve things. I certainly hope so, because the Asian market is a big one for films.

I don't know if this is true for Australian films, though, because the original filmmaker will not easily identify with your actors and actresses. You are due to go against the Chinese producers who have features suffered through Asia. They can afford to take chances.

Take *Ran Run Shaw*: he was making films in Hong Kong at a time when the average budget was very low, but he decided to risk big money, like with *Agatha* here, and it clicked.

In The Philippines we have a big audience per capita. Manila is one of the hottest places for show-business. People go to films because it is the cheapest form of entertainment.

How many of your stars come from showbusiness? The two worlds seem to be connected.

Some start off making records and they are invited into the films, but it's not usually the case. We still have a lot of unprofessional people.

What is the concept of "bold" stars?

Usually, it is the personality of the actress who is ready to "take all." Well, not all, but they have the wit, look, you know.

Censorship is very strict, and before you can make a film, you must have the script approved. Then, before you can screen it here or overseas, you have to show it again.



Stocks directs a scene from *Bath House* by John Hoshino, one of the credited writers from behind the wooden door.



Manuel de Leon, one of the influential figures in film production.

VILMA SANTOS

Lisa Bracks apparently has had problems sending his films out of the country ...

Yes, because the films showed life in the slums — but that's real. We are a poor country, yet they want us to show the world that we are very affluent.

The Italians were the first to make very credible films, like *Bicycle Thieves*. That was the renaissance of the Italian film.

Do you have this problem in Australia?

Malaya is the area of finding, where projects are put up to various companies for government support. Corporations are wary of political statements ...

When I was in Australia, I noticed that entertainment was trying to establish some sort of pact. The awards at the Asian Film Festival had an Aboriginal award, for example.

I liked the speech of your Minister who said, "Whether we like it or not, we are part of Asia."

A pretty well-balanced. Perhaps we have a clearer responsibility in relation to the other people in the Pacific ...

Well, there is no denying the fact that Australia is white, and isolated in a sea of Asians. But I suppose most of the films you make are for export to Europe.

We still hope for a European or U.S. sale. We would have to make a careful study before we did something for the Asian market ...

It is a tremendous potential, but I frankly don't know whether you can be accepted here. You still haven't been able to break into the American market. You have had some good reviews, but the films have only limited release. *

How did you get involved in film?

I was discovered by my uncle who was a cameraman in Singapore. Pictures I was one and starred in a film called *Ready and Ready*. After that, I was offered roles as a child actress, and when I was 13 I made two films for the First Family (President Marcos and Imelda Marcos) which was a demonstration of their duty. I played the role of Anna, the eldest daughter of the First Family.

When I was 16 the last came for musical film. Finally, when I was 20 I started being a dramatic actress.

So you didn't start in the music business ...

No, but I did make a record for the sake of the film. I can't do any more, though, because I prefer dancing to singing.

Apart from starring in many films, you also produce. Does that give you added worries?

Of course. If you are working as an actress with people, as well as being the producer, people treat you as the producer and not as an actress. That bothers me.

Do you have script approval?

Yes. First I read the script, then I

ask for the director and leading man I approve them all.

Like Greta Garbo, do you also have a special concernment?

No, not a concernment, but I have heard of that.

How many films do you do in a year?

Last year I made 10 — some of them simultaneously.

Apparently you don't like to start working early in the morning ...

No, I am an afternoon and usually sleep late. So I ask them to schedule me for after lunch. Usually we start at 4 or 5 p.m. and finish at 10 or 11 in the evening. Sometimes, however, we work through the night. If we do that, we don't have anything scheduled the next day.

Do you ever do research to help develop a role?

Only if the role is very nice, or it needs character.

Have you done this on "Mrs. Jones"?

Not so much, because I play the role of a dancer. I have already made a film where I am a bar-

leque dancer (*Baroque Queen*, which was a big success), so it is much the same.

Have you worked in other Asian countries?

When I was 11 years old I did a film with Doug McClure, Katherine Ross and Ricardo Montalban. The title was the *League 100 Miles*, and it was made for international release. I also made a Chinese film for international release.

You must have millions of fans ...

Yes of course I can't even go shopping at night. I am recognized. I have to get all my clothes sent to the house and then I select them by phone too.

I love my profession very much. The only thing is I don't have any privacy. I am public property, if I have want to do something, then I have to do it. But you can't please everybody and it is really hard.

How about the future?

Right now I am not producing any films, but I am making two. I have to finish this one and probably start another one immediately after that. Probably by the end of March I will leave to make another one in Los Angeles. So, I don't have any plans for production at the moment. *



Replied for use of "Vilma Santos" name film



Vilma Santos: the highest-paid "hot" star in The Philippines

S T E P H E N



W A L L A C E

Ken Quenell (a consultant on special project developments with the New South Wales Film Corporation) says we had and the NSWFC was interested in financing the work of directors who had made reasonably successful short films. They were initiating a low-budget fund and had approached a number of people: John Duigan, Phil Noyce, Gill Armstrong, Ken Cameron and me. I was told that if I had a project in mind they would talk about financing.

I think the NSWFC had heard about the prison film and were interested in it, but that was on the assumption it was only going to cost \$300,000. They thought it could be made as a low-budget, 16mm film, which turned out to be completely wrong. Had I put it in as a project under other conditions it would have been knocked back.

The film began as a Prisoners Action Group project. How did you become involved?

The PAG came to me. I was told that Tony Green (producer of the PAG's first two films, *Prisoners* and *Maximum Security*) wanted to

Before the release of "Silk", Stephen Wallace was best known as the writer and director of "Love Letters from Terabba Road", arguably the best one-hour drama made in Australia. The script was written at Film Australia, where Wallace had worked as a production assistant and then as a writer. Film Australia had intended to produce the film as part of a series, but ultimately shelved it. It was then independently produced by Richard Brennan, and starred Bryan Brown.

While "Love Letters" was being edited, Wallace attended the Australian Film and Television School as one of the first four participants in the one-year scriptwriting course. Since then, he has made another short film, "Cannon Harry and the Others" (featuring Bryan Brown), and "Silk", his first feature. Written by Bob Jensen and produced by Richard Brennan, "Silk" examines the build-up of tension and ultimate confrontation between prisoners and wardens in an Australian gaol.

In this interview, conducted by Barbara Alyson, Wallace begins by discussing how he became involved with the project.

have a good look at me, and my first to see if I was the right person to direct the film.

We then had a meeting at which we talked about the concept of the film, and whether it should be a documentary or told as a story. We agreed that it should be dramatic

and follow one character through the riots.

When I asked who was going to write it, Tony said, "We have this guy who is a bit like you, he is a bit of a writer." I don't think Tony really knew how good Bob Jensen was as a writer. He gave me Bob's

address and sent me over, telling me I had to look at his writing to see if he could write.

Did the PAG want to make the film collectively?

Some did. Certainly it was going to be a group effort, but after another meeting it seemed impossible to make it that way. I didn't feel it was going to work. Finally, the NSWFC refused to deal with anyone other than myself and Bob.

But the PAG was involved with the film in the end?

Lee Westmore was the production designer and there are a lot of PAG members in the film. There were advisors on set all the time.

Where does the PAG stand now in relation to the film?

It has a percentage and, although it hasn't any legal ownership, it has very strong links with the film.

The spirit of *Silk* is Tony Green. Bob wrote the script and I directed it, but Tony was the driving force

—dispute anything it may say

Did you always have Bryan Brown in mind for the lead?

Yes. Actually, I was the first to use him in a film. He was appearing in a play *How Come the Nigger*, at the Black Theatre [Written by Gerry Blotock, and about trying to be successful as a film by Brown and Blotock].

Sandy Richardson [director of several short films] took me to see the play while we were casting for the main role in *Love Letters*. I hadn't been able to find anybody suitable, and we were doing it compromise with someone who wasn't quite right. Sandy was really keen for Bryan to get the part, but I felt he wasn't right.

After the performance Sandy introduced us, and I asked him to read the script and then do a test. He did and Richard [Brown], my producer, thought he was great.

Apparently you recruited Brown going into other films?

I did, and I tried to stop him. I felt a lot of directors were just using him and exploiting his obviously magnetic face without really making his role a character. But I suppose that's being a bit critical.

I wonder how many times an actor can appear in it Australia without becoming awfully rich?

Well, if people are sick of Bryan, the public doesn't know. I was a bit worried about saying him in *Sid*, but who else is there? We started work on the film two years before shooting it, and in those two years Bryan appeared in many films.

You made the male actors take part in a clown workshop, which most of them disliked. What was behind that?

The ambience I had for the clown workshop didn't come out. I was hoping for a really relaxed style and great spontaneity.

Many of the actors missed the purpose of the workshop, and I realize now that you can't thrust actors into a workshop of that kind. They are professionals and have their own standards and training. It would have needed a year's training program to put them through this kind of workshop and expect anything to come out of it.

It was my mistake and I almost chastised some of them. I think the idea was right, but the way I went about it was wrong.

What about the rest of the workshop?

The clown workshop ran for four days and the rest of the workshop for three weeks. Looking back, I think the whole workshop was too long. It ended up being mainly

rehearsals and not every actor got a lot out of it.

It was important, however, in that PAF members Tony Green, Kevin Storey and Bob came along and talked to the actors, and took them through the experience of being in prison, what it was like to be in a boys' home, how they were ordered about, the hierarchy, the rewards, how prisoners react to each other. They looked at films, talked to Les Newcombe [a former prisoner who appears in *Sid*, and who is author of *Justice Due*] and read books.

Apparently you had problems finding enough extras in South Australia, despite the unemployment problem?

We had a lot of trouble because we were shooting in a town well away from anywhere else, and most of the extras had to come from Port Pirie. We couldn't find enough locally and we couldn't afford to fly them from Adelaide.

I was told later that some potential extras couldn't have their hair cut, so we had to lose them.

Hasn't a lot of the extras been in prison?

Yes. There is one sequence where five guys fight before the governor, and three of them have each done more than 10 years in prison; one of them was an actor.

"Sid" is your first film in 35mm. Did you find many problems in making the transition from 16mm?

The difference between the players is that the 16mm camera is not as fluid as 35mm. We observed to be more careful with stock.

I remember Pat Joyce saying he worried about taking responsibility for all this money, but the cost never occurred to me. I hadn't originally wanted to make such a big-budget film and I felt at first that I had been pushed into it. But then I realized we couldn't possibly have made it for less. And what it came to the crunch, I was too involved in making the film to worry about the money.

Did you overshoot?

I think the ratio was about 11 to 1, and it was supposed to be 10 to 1. So we only overshot a little.

The camerawork in "Love Letters" makes a lot of use of the close lens. Was "Sid" a big change of style?

Yes. Geoff Barton [cinematographer] and I thought it would be more suitable to shoot *Sid* with fixed lenses, at a more less great documentary feel. It's a bit loose. Looking at it now, though, it might have been a bit formal.

Did shooting an entire film within a confined space, and with only a

small variation in color, worry you?

It did, although the prison had very beautiful breakdown. You are always inside the prison and it is claustrophobic, so I wonder if that will interest people enough to hold their attention. I was also a bit worried that there were no women in it. [There is one, a television reporter].

The other problem I found was trying to make a film about an area of which I had no direct experience. I was reliant on advisors and I kept making mistakes, like leaving the locks off the doors. There was one scene where I originally had the warden [Max Phipps] having a cup of tea while he was talking to one of the prisoners. But when off his head and said, "Prison officers don't have tea while they are working. They are too bored as the prisoners and they are not allowed to do that sort of thing." I was quite shocked. I thought just having a cup of tea would give him something to do.

Not knowing what a prison is really like was always a problem. How do you make down corridors? How do they salute the warden? How do they open doors? What do they say to each other?

One of the actors who played a warden told me that he knew much more about how to behave once he put on his uniform....





Along the prisoners are held in new awards ceremony in a new prison. Below left: Chris (Nigel Brown), Jeffrey (James Kirkby) and

Yes. I remember he used to go out and polish his boots, and when he'd done that he'd start asking people about it. I used to have a great respect for him.

I treated the inmates exactly like their characters. Because they walked in with their uniforms, polished boots and caps. It's an intimidating process.

Did you consider having any women in the film, as girlfriends for example?

Yes. At first there was a woman second worker and another woman character in the film, but they weren't good characters and were dropped. Given up until the second day, I said there was a question where Chris Jackson (Clayton Brown) has a wife from his girlfriend. But I was always worried about her as a character.

When we had to cut the budget I cut her scene out so as to have kept it would have caused building some visiting boxes and bringing an actress from Adelaide. We replaced it with a scene where the prisoners receive letters.

Did the strong language in the script bother you?

No, but it did worry the sound recorder. After about the third week he said, "Look, Steve, I am just an ordinary middle-class guy and I can't see this film, and being racist." And once it is racist, I don't think anything is going to come and see it. He told me he wouldn't see it because of the swear words.

It's obvious the language is going to be a source of contention, but that's a decision we made.

Was the NSWFC worried about the language?

Yes. They thought it wouldn't sell on television, have an overseas sale. In fact, that was their biggest worry about the film. But, now, we made the decision, the NSWFC looked at all the new.

Prisoners are a certain kind of language because they are bound to it. Just because. The point of the film isn't the language — it's much more political than that — and if you appreciate what the film is about, you forget the language. But even that as prisoners objected to it when they read the script. They felt we were showing prisoners in a bad light. In the end, it was up to Bob to decide whether to leave it in or be in the authentic as-prisoner.

One other worry would be that people might object to the use of four-letter words, and then query the

wisdom of government involvement

Well if people start to compare it with the rest of the world, it's not so good — which occurred under a Liberal state government — it might be construed that we were given government funds to attack the Liberal party.

With films that have a social message, like "Shogun", there is a level at which people say, "Oh no, it's not really as bad as that." Does your question against that possibility?

We tried to show authentically what it was like to be in jail. It isn't like a "bad" movie where things are just that bad. They have beds they walk around and it looks quite casual, but the underlying violence is obvious.

Prison is an extremely lonely and isolated place. Men are constantly moved and moved around, and they are locked up in cells for 24 or 18 hours. It's the sheer boredom, the frustration, that's destructive. It's like a really bad boarding school, but you can't get out.

You are not allowed contact with women. You have only brief contact with other prisoners. You have your meals in your cell. Warden are constantly nagging you.

You can look at it and think everything looks all right — the prisoners are walking around, they

are not being beaten every day — but if a prisoner does stand up to the system he gets beaten and thrown into the really bad place, which Raymond Denning (NSW prison escapee) has spoken about.

We didn't show the observation station at Griffith or Katigall at Long Bay. But we have prisoners being taken off all the time — they're taken in the middle of the night — and you don't see where they go, but it is obviously to much worse places.

Were any of your prisoners black?

Only one. We wanted to have lots of black prisoners, but the film was about Aboriginal prisoners. At Richmond — the jail that Bob was in — the people who noted were mostly white. Apparently the Aboriginals didn't want any part of the film. They said it was a white man's world, according to Bob, went off in another part of the jail.

We should have had more black prisoners, because there are lots of black people in jail. We tried to get Aboriginals in the street, but there were no blacks in the district. We did get one guy for a day, but he didn't want anything to do with it and left. So the film isn't representative in that sense.

Are you suggesting an alternative to prison?

No. The film doesn't suggest one and I don't know of any. But there are certainly alternatives to that sort of prison where just makes people worse.

Someone remarked to me that Steve wasn't producing anything new. At first, I was quite offended and thought, "Of course it's new." Then I realized it wasn't new because it has all happened before in every jail. But as a way that the point of it (if the content of it) was new, people would say it was a unique prison. But it's not.

Basically, it is a bit of understanding that comes with the film is meant to increase understanding. Bob says that unless something is done, people are going to be killed. Eventually there will be bigger riots, with hostages taken and the constant harassment are taken there will be bloodshed and war will be killed.

The reason for making Steve was social. It wasn't a personal film for me. It was like a contract job — a way, although I identify thoroughly with everything the prisoners want.

It's not a heavily-political film because you don't see what happens to the prisoners later. You only see what happens at the jail and how to draw your own conclusions.

On the other hand, we hope it's a warning message for people to see just as a film. That's why the NSWFC backed it. I don't think they were particularly interested in the prison issue. ■



WHEN IT COMES TO AUSTRALIAN DRAMA, CHANNEL SEVEN ISN'T AFRAID TO ACT.

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'Homicide', 'Cop Shop', 'Skyways', 'Tandara', 'Cash and Co', 'Against the Wind', 'A Town Like Alice' and the brilliant new series, 'The Last Outlaw' were all produced with our backing and encouragement.

We are proud to have given Australian talent opportunities they might not have found elsewhere.

We're also proud to have given Australian audiences exactly the same thing.



RON CASEY

TELEVISIONG THE OLYMPICS

Ron Casey, general manager of HSV-7 Melbourne, talks to Scott Murray about the Seven Network's coverage of the 1980 Moscow Olympics.

When did the Seven Network get the telecast rights in the 1980 Olympic Games?

We signed the contract in the last week of April, 1977, but negotiations had been going on for about two months. Originally it was going to be a good arrangement, with a combination of the commercial stations and the ABC. This was the way the Olympics had been covered in the past, even at Munich when there were only two stations in the pool (the ABC and the Seven Network).

There was, in fact, a meeting where the networks agreed that, with the ABC, there would be a good coverage of Moscow. Shortly afterwards, I learned there was a network already negotiating in Moscow. So, we approached the Russians and asked them to discuss any negotiations with us — which they did.

Was it a bad situation, or was there a price to be met?

We made them a proposition, which they considered for some time. I don't know whether it was a bad situation, or what the other networks did. The Russians never offered any of those negotiations to us.

Did Seven's affiliated stations throughout Australia automatically become part of the deal?

Yes. When you have a major program, like the Olympics, it is usual to offer it to them.

Also on the same telecast were the five members of the Arab Broadcasting Union...

That was because of convenience in using the Indian Ocean satellite, which they can pick up from their ground stations. They took all the Australian material from us, and also a little football material of their own. They paid me commentary in most situations, and their own in others.

Before the Olympics, what was Seven's position regarding the political opposition to Australia's participation?

In a word, difficult.



Were you confident that the situation would be resolved in the athletes' favor?

No, because you never know how these sorts of things will go. It would be impossible to estimate the amount of pressure on the members of the Olympic Federation. As it turned out, there was only a one-vote difference.

Was there also pressure on the athletes?

There was some persuasion, yes.

How did the affiliated stations react to the situation?

Each station made an individual decision. There was no concerted action with any of them.

Had the athletes not been allowed to go, would the boycott have gone ahead?

Probably, but not with the same scope. What was envisioned at most of the staff and about as well that we had a contract, not only with the organizing committee in Moscow, but with the International Olympic Committee. And quite apart from the financial obligations of this contract, there was a requirement for us to televise the Games. As it was, we telecast for considerably fewer hours than we had originally planned because of a lack of commercial support.

Had there been no problems, how many hours would have been telecast?

About twice as many. We would have extended the evening telecast, and probably doubled the early morning ones.

Was there a minimum commitment, in terms of hours, in the contract?

No. So, I don't know how much we would have shown if Australia had not gone. Fortunately, we didn't have to make that decision. It is interesting that the Japanese who had no athletes at Moscow, actually telecast five more hours than we did. We took 47 people and they took 72.

Given the dilemma of feeling within Australia's community, was there also dissension among your crew?

No. Most of them were broadcast men who were just interested in broadcasting the event. From a policy point of view, all we wanted was to present the Olympics as the Olympics, with no overtaken comment. By letting the public see these as they were, people could make up their minds.

The only exception is that would be the opening night's commentary, when you expressed some hopes for

fervens in the judging by Soviet officials. That is not a comment that would be made at all Olympic Games...

I can't recall saying that specifically towards the Soviet judges, but there have always been problems with judging in the Olympics. This is particularly true with sports like diving, gymnastics and boxing where you have international panels.

One can go back to 1960 and Rocky Casale, the Australian boxer, who got a terrible decision at the quarter final. And the guy who got the decision went on to win the gold medal.

How do you rate Moscow in terms of controversial decisions?

If anything, there were probably less than at Montreal. Still some of the decisions, especially in the boxing, were unbelievable. There was also the deal-up at the finish of the gymnastics and the diving, and there were the situations where there were only Soviet referees, like on the inside jump. But there is nothing special or unusual about that, it happens at every Olympics.

So if I said something along those lines during the opening night, I probably reflected the tensions in the period leading up to the Games. It would have only taken some serious misjudgment, or a serious error in a judging panel, to set the whole thing off in a way, very bad indeed. As it turned out, it didn't happen.

Were you surprised by the amount of coverage given to the boycott decision in the Australian Press?

Yes.

What is your personal feeling about (reconciling) politics with sport?

I think it is a tragedy that political infighting have become involved in sport. But it would be foolish to say that it is possible to keep them apart — you just can't. Some countries stayed away from the Melbourne Olympics in 1956 because of the Suez Canal problems and others because of the Soviet presence in Hungary. It happened in Montreal because New Zealand had played football with South Africa — all the African nations stayed away. There is even a possibility that the African nations stayed away from the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane, which would be a tragedy. But if countries want to take that attitude, you can't stop them.

I think Lord Kilmeny's attitude was the right one. He led the Olympic movement through its most serious crisis, on a very simple philosophy: the Olympic Games are awarded to a city and athletes are invited to be there. There is no compromise or seigniorism at stake.



The signing of the agreement in Moscow. Ron Chay, general manager of HSV-7 Melbourne (front left), and Ted Thomas, general manager of AIN-7 Sydney (front right).

How do you think the public's comprehension of politics and sport has changed since the Games?

I don't know. I have only been back a short time, and haven't had an opportunity to gauge public reaction. But by reading the thousands of letters we have received, I think the public accept the fact that it might have been a bit of political infighting for no real purpose. People were half expecting to see a huge propaganda exercise and were pleasantly surprised to see there wasn't.

Such a propaganda exercise, undoubtedly, would have been very difficult to achieve because the character of the Olympic movement is very strict. You can't, for instance, do much with a 100 metres race. You are inside a stadium, you have a running track, a crowd and night finishes. It's a bit hard to make a political exercise out of that.

How successful was Seven's coverage of the Games?

In terms of public acceptance and the pleasure it gave a lot of people, I think we can feel fairly well satisfied.

Given the disappointing amount of revenue, how expensive an exercise was it for Seven?

Expensive.

Our writer is "TV Week" says

that Channel Seven's buying program would be cut back because of the cost. Is that true?

No, there is no evidence to support that.

Does Channel Seven wear making a loss an ultimately worthwhile investment the image of a sports-entertainment outlet?

With hindsight, yes, because people did watch, accept and enjoy the Games. But we weren't too certain of that when we went into it. We were stepping into an unknown area: where the risks, and the public reception, were completely unknown.

What is the position regarding broadcast rights for the next Olympic Games?

We haven't thought about that yet. It's four years away. We will wait and see.

Turning to more technical aspects, what were you given in the way of facilities at Moscow?

We had a three-camera studio and a control room to operate that studio. There were a technical area with videotape machines and three offices adjacent to our production area. We took our own EG equipment: two crews and two vans.

Continued on P. 38



The pressroom studios



The viewing booth at Telos



T H E L A S T O U T L A W

A sketch of the making of the Pegasus-Seven Network mini-series, by Ian Jones, who, with Bronwyn Binns, was co-writer and joint executive producer.

In the vocabulary of film, epic is a dragon—big and often misused word. But, fitting the title of Ned Kelly, you confront a story which has, literally, epic qualities.

The huge, logistical problems posed by an accurate reconstruction of the 1870s become a secondary consideration. You are dealing with a subject that has gripped the Australian imagination in a unique way for nearly a century. The challenge is to bring Ned Kelly to life as a normally complex human being without losing all objectivity, to achieve an intimate portrait without overlooking the conflict which shaped the fate of this remarkable man.

Apart from the manifold traps in portraying Kelly's character, the pure scale of the story has always presented a problem. Dramatic treatments have tended to fall between the stools of modest and character, simply because 90-odd minutes isn't enough time to cover the essential events, and winosaiety heralds the huge gallery of people who played significant roles. It's hardly coincidental that the Kelly story presented the world's first full-length feature film.

In the past, the solutions have been to combine characters, places, even incidents, to refine the complexities of character and plot, or to concentrate on only a part of the story.

Left: John Ewart as Ned Kelly



Burt Reynolds and Tom Lee Jones play Aaron's uneasy alliance



Lenny the Gerd as Tom Lloyd as the backfired, cracking the Kelly Gang's winner

Debra Stewart made a good list of it in his verse play *Not Kelly* — covering only the Jimmie Rodgers, the death of Aaron Shriver, and the Glenavon State.

Twenty-odd years ago, Tom Bond's proposed *Miss in Blue* feature was based solely on the events of Glenavon.

Brown and I had worked on Tony Richardson's *Not Kelly* (without ever getting to meet each other) and were acutely aware of the acute problem — one of the nuclei in which Tony's project scraped its bones.

To us the television miniseries offered the perfect medium for the Kelly saga, effectively breaking the initial time barrier and providing the chance to tell the story without compromise on historical and dramatic levels.

We had just completed *Against the Wind* and used this budgeting and historical notebook as a template that a Kelly series would cost roughly twice as much as *Not Kelly*. This estimate was based on a much bigger cast, substantially more on- and location construction, many more horses and other livestock, and a wide range of locations. And, of course, inflation.

Without doing any detailed sums, we looked on an eight-hour format — a runtime length in terms of dramatic content and possible budget.

That was February 1979. As we cleared the decks after *Against the Wind* and began our run-up for *The Last Outlaw*, Pacific Productions comprised two people — Brown and myself. Ideally, the series would be on air in 1980 — the Kelly centenary year. Allowing 10 days shooting on location plus extensive post-production turnaround, that meant that production would have to start no later than February 1980, with some pre-production in September or October — only seven months away.

Obviously, scripts wouldn't be finished by this date, so we had to limit the discipline of detailed pre-planning, making precise scene breakdowns of every episode, which would include all sets, characters, scenes, livestock and major props.

Early in the year we recruited our producer, Roger La Moir (then completing production of a spectacular New

Zeland series *Children of Eve* Mountain and associate producer Tom Bond, who had been production assistant on *Against the Wind*. Tom and Roger worked from our intentions where we programmed the scripts.

Art director Leslie Burns and wardrobe designer Jane Hyland joined us in September/October, starting on an exhaustive research and discussion program based on our break-



Director George Miller (left) and his assistant Clayton Kopp (right) on a job of new shot, edited by Tony La Haye (right) (left) and Clayton Kopp (right)

downs and scripts as they came to hand.

As budgeting advanced, we took time off writing and conferences to survey locations close to Melbourne. At this stage, our production concept was basically that of *Against the Wind* — an aerial shoot of performers at distant locations, then use a home base studio where exterior sets would be erected, with most cameras being shot on separate sequences on locations within 30 km of Melbourne.

The concept entailed some compromises in terms of authenticity and creative integrity. But, essentially, there seemed no alternatives.

The location surveys were discouraging. We all knew the layout we wanted. And we weren't finding it. After an unsuccessful trip around the Mirrabooka-Woodend area, Boroonya, Lat Boro and I decided that we'd have to push our luck further — to the Broadford-Seymour district, 100 km from Melbourne — and cope with the travel problem as best we could.

That same week, Tom Bates began talks with the Seymour Shire Council and reported that he felt they would be enthusiastic supporters of a television series being filmed in their area. And the ball was rolling.

In an almost bewildering series of developments, we visited Seymour, met Shire officials and also gained the enthusiasm and support of the Australian Army's District Support Group based at nearby Puckapunyal.

Between them, the Shire and the Army could help solve many of our problems and, suddenly, the all-but-definite idea of shooting the series on a location 100 km from Melbourne, was becoming a possibility.

It would mean re-equipping and finding a cast and crew of nearly 60 for the four-month schedule, and setting up complete post-production facilities on location. But apart from five access to superb exterior locations, it would give us the chance to shoot virtually all our interiors in the actual buildings — a huge creative bonus.

The final hurdle was to secure premises from the Council for use as a studio and catering, rented a factory for office space, set-up four-camera studio, wardrobe, and post-production, leased a huge Army warehouse as a prop store, and found perfect key locations on the hundreds, 500 ha property of local grazier, Bruce O'Sullivan,

only an kilometres from our barracks base. Here, we planned to build our town complex (a daunting composite of the seven towns we needed as backgrounds for our series) the 'old' and 'new' Kelly homesteads, the Byrne and Streritt huts, and the Glenrowan Inn.

The valley of the Coalbarn, the Tallbrook Ranger, and the Mount Disappointment State Forest would provide our other major locations.

While all these plans were being laid, we were advancing drawing with Tom and catering with Roger. And, of course, writing. Our two directors, George Miller and Kevin Debon, were joining the fold. George had been a very early appointment initially to direct all eight hours. But, as he realised the scale of the project, he suggested that a second director should take two hours off his plate. The choice of Kevin Debon was unanimous.

Eventually, in the course of production, Kevin directed another two hours, so that he and Miller ended up sharing the load equally.

The contract for the series was negotiated with the Seven Network in the positive and enthusiastic atmosphere that had characterised our dealings on *Against the Wind*. When we had to set a sale price of more than \$1 million, they didn't quibble. We realised we were on the line that an Australian network could afford, yet we also knew we could bring a cast and concept series at this price only with carefully tight control and a degree of luck.

A production office was rented from Channel Seven while pre-production was advanced, beginning with the renovation and re-entrustment of the barracks building and, eventually, the moving on to the cutting of bark and bush timber needed for our set construction.

Monomaster John Reid started buying materials for the Kelly Gang and gathering auxiliary props. Firearms, and set drawings were handed down and bought, borrowed, or hired.

By January 1980, plans were starting to fill out. Seymour's workhouse, warehouse was picked, six plan rooms in a temporary home at the Vaudeville Theatre, construction had begun on the old Kelly homestead, and the green streets of our town were laid out and graded. As backdrops were starting, as the



Kelly (John Jarratt) about his job as average in *Wild West* (Diana Breckin)

surface of the town the first script was completed.

At the beginning of February, we flew the Kelly Gang and a crew to Forbes in central New South Wales, for two days' shooting at the Lachlan Vintage Village. This gave us the plans terrain we needed for our *Jenderson* scenes — to be integrated with the main street of 1850 Jenderson, which was being built at Seymour.

The following week, the Gang worked with dialogue coach Frank Gilchrist and got to know their horses. Then, on February 5, we packed up in Melbourne and moved to Seymour.

On February 11, we started filming and began an intensely exhilarating, although at times depressing, four-month job. It seemed to drag on for years, yet passed too quickly.

A few people were totally dedicated to the project, most worked well, the apparently inexhaustible handful of egg-tippers and mail-carriers played their usual roles.

A hot, almost climatic, and rainless summer gave way to a long and magnificent autumn, which dissolved into an increasingly misty and muddy winter — we almost made-in-order range of weather conditions for the photos of our story, superbly handled by lighting cameraman Ernest Clark.

We finished shooting 10 days over schedule and substantially over selling price. We then settled down for a month's post-production at Seymour as editor Phil Reid finished the film.

At this stage we wrapped up in Seymour and moved back to Melbourne for sound editors Terry Rodman and Glenn Martin to complete their work.

As I write this, we are waiting for the last winter print from Allen, the last sound mix has just been completed by David Harrison, working at the Crawford music suite. When May has composed arranged, and conducted a planning score, recorded by Roger Savage at A.V.

The Kelly town has been demolished, the Army has moved into the barracks, the factory has been sold, the props are warehoused, the wardrobe is literally in mothballs.

Pegasus Productions is back to square one — two people.

It's been one hell of a 30 months. But if we have told the Kelly story as it deserves to be told, then it's been worth it. ■



Kelly's final moments at the Old Melbourne Gaol before his execution

TELEVISION PRODUCTION SURVEY

4. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau*[illegible]

THE FOLLOWING

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		SYD. ¹	M.L. ²	PTH	ADL	BRL	Total \$	Rank	SYD.	M.L.	PTH	ADL	BRL	Total \$	Rank
Breaker Morant	RS	(27) 343,555	(35) 199,520		(31) 87,541		527,622	1				(27) 144,366		144,366	2
The Earthling	RS	(114/117) 27,379	(278) 10,481			(2) 3708	41,548	2							
My Brilliant Career	GUO		(31) 24,878	(1) 2238			27,115	3	(3) 33,821	(117) 63,791	(346) 21,214	(25) 27,828	(5/11) 21,768	278,120	1
Manganavie	GUO	(27) 6022	(27) 5871				55,833	4							
Harlequin	GUO			(75) 1129			1029	5	(1) 4939	(1) 3204	(1) 15,984	(30) 16,445		35,452	3
Australian Total		290 856	247 834	3819	87 541	3789	623 755		87 841	87 785	194 268	281 327	49 414	530 585	
Foreign Total ³		2 727 838	2 362 529	1 214 083	541 911	764 381	7 771 659		3 812 180	3 252 658	1 995 045	1 873 364	874 860	10 887 354	
Gross Total		3 008 694	2 610 364	1 218 422	729 452	798 690	8 394 600		4 001 040	3 340 243	1 799 353	1 212 731	624 274	11 327 942	

¹ Figures exclude GST taxes

² Figures exclude GST and other taxes have been reported to Kinema Photocopy the Australian film finance body

³ Figures exclude the total box office gross of all foreign films shown during the period in this table and

⁴ Figures are rounded

⁵ Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars in the table. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars in the table.

1. Australian film industry body only. 2. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 3. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 4. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 5. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 6. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 7. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 8. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 9. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 10. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 11. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 12. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 13. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 14. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 15. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 16. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 17. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 18. Figures are rounded to the nearest million dollars. 19. 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Tony Williams

Co-production

In an interview to "Cinema Papers" in 1978, you said that the only hope for the survival of the New Zealand industry was co-production. Do you still feel the same way?

I said that at a time when there wasn't a New Zealand Film Commission. But I still think that whether it is co-production, or some other sort of financial involvement from outside New Zealand, it's still true.

Co-production gives the New Zealand industry access to a bigger market and helps inject a little bit more professionalism into areas where we need it. We are too small an industry to not ourselves off from experts.

Do you see Australia as a natural co-production partner for New Zealand?

Yes, because there is a history of Australians and New Zealanders working together. So we can co-produce without the feeling that there is a certain amount of cultural imperialism going on.

In my business I have been

Tony Williams is one of New Zealand's best-known filmmakers. He started his career at Pacific Films as an assistant cameraman at the age of 16, and then travelled to the U.S. to study at the University of Southern California's film department.

Returning to New Zealand, he acted as director of photography on John O'Shea's two features, "Runaway" and "Don't Let It Get You". Williams then went to London, where he worked as a freelance editor before making his debut as a director on two documentaries for the BBC's "Release" program.

Back in New Zealand, he spent five years making independent television documentaries, three of which won The Feltex "Best Television Program of the Year" award in consecutive years.

In 1978, Williams co-wrote and directed his first feature film, "Solo", an Australian-New Zealand co-production starring Vincent Gill and Lisa Piers. Last year, he was invited to direct "A Special Kenny Rogers", a 50-minute CBS television special shot in Texas.

Williams has his own film production company in Wellington, and is New Zealand's — and one of the world's — top commercials directors.

As this year's Cinema Papers interview awards for best overall direction, and best commercial.

Williams was in Australia recently, working for The Film House, where he talked to Peter Bulby about the New Zealand film industry.

working successfully with Australians since 1955. And of course the Australian film industry is full of New Zealanders anyway.

I think there is an advantage in having an indigenous film industry but, as a commercial businessman, New Zealand needs to be able to have involvement with other countries, to provide more money, more technicians and more actors.

The recent wrangle between Australian producers and Actors Equity over the use of foreign actors threatens to restrict a free exchange of talent between Australia and New Zealand. What are your feelings about this?

I would like to see the reverse happen. I would rather the doors opened further, and see free trade flourish. I would like to see the two countries getting closer together all the time.

Do you think the NZFC should be playing a more upfront role in trying to bring overseas producers and overseas government agencies together with New Zealand filmmakers? Or do you think this is an initiative which should be taken by producers?

I think the NZFC has a very tricky role because whereas they do they are going to be criticised, and they have my sympathy for that.

But independent filmmakers are characterised by the people who once upon a time, were seen on the backs of their hands, put a hand-cranked camera in the back of a truck with a few actors and went off and made comedies in Hollywood. Then they took the risk under their arm and went around the country and tried to flag it. And that essentially, is the spirit of independent filmmakers in New Zealand — even though there has been a lack of opportunity in the past.

I believe the NZFC is there to work for these filmmakers and to help support them, rather than to take the initiative and lead. The danger is that the NZFC will become yet another state authority — a bureaucratic body which takes the initiative instead of the industry.

There are times when the industry is more. There are also times when the industry is an experienced, but so is the NZFC.

Do you think the Commission should become involved in areas other than finance — distribution for example?

Yes. I think there is a separate role offer as long as it doesn't supplant the producer. I think New Zealand is weighed down with state bureaucracy, which has been responsible for the death of film making in the country. What the NZFC should be offering is advice and support.

The NZFC

As someone who was very closely involved with the establishment of the NZFC, what are your comments on its development?

When I was involved trying to get the NZFC set up and doing a lot of lobbying, I thought it was important that we heard from the advocates of others, and that we tried to avoid the bureaucracy we had had to face as New Zealand filmmakers for years. I was very clear that the NZFC would have along that line offering assistance to, and backing New Zealand producers. But I think there have been times when they have wanted to go off on a tangent and become New Zealand's official producers.

I can see this tendency within personalities and within the Commission as a whole. I support it, so it's inevitable. They sit there all day and hear about the problems in the industry, and want to take an initiative or make a move.

But by and large, I think we have tried to step them down heavily each time, sometimes



John Raftery, NZFC producer, recently involved in a co-production

unfairly. I think it's important that we do keep them in check, even when they are trying to do a good job. What we have to keep reminding them of all the time is that they are there to serve us, not the other way around. We don't want to be treated like candidates for an Arts Council grant, and we are not strong enough, we are filmmakers.

But on the whole, despite the fact that they get a lot of criticism from independent filmmakers, I think they are doing a good job. I think they are willing to listen to the industry and, fortunately, they haven't become over-bureaucratic.

Do you think the level of finance allocated to the NZFC allows it to fund a sufficient number of films?

That leads into another argument and another problem for many films: the industry should be making and whether we could sustain a film industry with just one feature a year, or maybe it hasn't too? Which brings us to the main problem, the huge gap between features and commercials which should be filled by sales and finance — which is not common in New Zealand because we have the most ridiculous two channel television system in the world.

By raising a new question, I think the important comments on the NZFC are most apparent in their lack of support for young developing filmmakers. I think the most urgent thing we need is an experimental film fund. That is what genre is most — where the next generation of filmmakers will come from. And I think one of the mistakes that the NZFC has made is to encourage the making of 30-year big-screen productions or producers to a wider range of films.

NZFC given their budget, once the NZFC has committed finance to five or six features, their funds are used up.

What I am suggesting is that one of these films may better have been

made on a lower budget, on film, as an experimental film, or even as a television film, rather than on a huge budget, on 35mm, just so we are released theatrically. In other words, we need to have different sorts of production.

How many feature films should the NZFC be backing?

Three films a year would be a good number at this point. But I think those three films need to be backed by more activity below the feature film level, so that script, technicians, writers and directors are breaking their back on something a little less ambitious and learning their craft.

Do you think the NZFC should adopt strictly commercial criteria in selecting the feature films they support, or do you think they should function as more than a mereback bank and encourage production?



The Williams family from *Family Affairs* and *Family Affairs* in *Family Affairs*.

which may be worthwhile for artistic or other reasons?

I think that discussion can go on forever. The NZFC has to have a budget, so that can be because the *Nine News* and hopefully *Nicky Kato* and other strong commercial films are the ones that will get the industry on its feet. You can't really afford to go completely into an films or completely into the commercial market. I think you have to create an equal balance.

Television

Australian television is really the backbone of the feature film industry, because it provides actors, technicians and key crew as personnel with a continuous sea of employment. How much work does New Zealand television generate for the local industry?

Practically none. And it never will under its present charter. Our television system is top-heavy. It has too much, no concept even of what it is.

I used to work in British television at BBC, and I know that state-owned television can be marvellous. But we don't have that. We have two state-controlled commercial channels that, at best churn out light entertainment. I am fighting for independent television as an alternative.

Why doesn't New Zealand television commission state independently-produced drama?

Because of the sort of patron writing for state television. They tend to be empire builders. They are not as it for any commercial gain, they are not really interested.

I was once told by the head of programs at Television New Zealand that they are not at all in

subsidise New Zealand feature films. Given I argued that a feature film was only 90 minutes of New Zealand drama, representing an unbroken film, wouldn't I understand what I was talking about?

He also went on to say that if a film has been shown in the cinema, he felt television was getting it second rate. Whereas in any other country in the world they pay more for a film if it has been released in a cinema.

So, they are very naive, and they don't really understand what we are talking about. We need to sweep the doors and start again, it is the only way.

Is there any more in that direction?

Yes, there is a body of people who haven't disclosed themselves yet, who are going to attack us in a very big way with a lot of money behind them. I think that is the only hope of changing the system.

Government Attitudes

It seems strange that the New Zealand Government is trying to foster a local industry by subsidising production through the NZFC, while its own television commission won't commission or buy New Zealand programs — except at unattractively low rates.

I recently had dinner with the Minister for Broadcasting, the Minister of the Arts and the Cancer Commission in Washington. They had no hope for the future.

On the one hand they have invested \$500,000 in the New Zealand film industry, but on the other they have imposed a 40 per cent tax on filmstock, which is going to pull about \$1 million back

Therefore, even on the basis of cost-effectiveness, there has to be a change in what we are doing. But the politicians don't understand that yet. Obviously from talking up there they have an idea of all of what the NZFC should be doing.

There doesn't seem to be an active producers' organisation in New Zealand. Do you think producers are, therefore, responsible for the ignorance and the misguided actions of the politicians?

Up to a point. I certainly think a more organised body may help the situation. But what you also have to understand is there are not that many producers. The most qualified ones are working flat out trying to get a project together. I have spent years hammering away at the bureaucracies that run our lives — the television system and the Government — and I have got to a point now where I feel I have done my lot and I am going to get about

The Film Unit

Another organisation under government control is the New Zealand Film Unit. There has been quite a bit of criticism of its role and its activities. It appears that the Government has made a major investment in a world standard production and post-production facility which is largely unused. What role do you think the Unit should perform?

Again, it has to be re-structured. As a facility, the Film Unit could be one of the finest in the world — if not the finest — in terms of post-production. They have dubbing theatres, post-synch theatres, facilities, theatres, master dubbing, sound theatres, the likes of which don't exist anywhere else. Australia — even Hollywood doesn't have some of the facilities.

But the Unit can't afford to market those facilities and they don't have the right people in there

there with it set up the way it is.

Do you think the ownership and control of the Unit should be moved into private hands, or is it just a matter of shaking it up a bit?

I don't think that just shaking it up is going to work. What I am talking about is a cultural revolution! There was a suggestion once that the Commission could be involved in the running of the laboratory, but it finally came back to the people that are there. And while the people who work there have to be civil servants, the Unit will never be able to pay enough money to attract the kind of world-class technicians you need in such a facility.

What it comes to building anything with bricks and mortar, then the New Zealand Government will pour millions of dollars into any facility you want, but the moment it comes to staffing them, they refuse to pay realistic, competitive salaries.



The New Zealand Film Unit in Wellington. It's not too far from the world.



Williams and John Verrill during production of Williams' award-winning B&W commercial.

into their pockets.

Television will still only pay about \$10,000 for a feature film, which doesn't even pay off the tax that the Government has imposed!

So, they really have no prices at all on the film industry. They act up the NZFC, perhaps to win a few votes and keep a few people quiet, but obviously not as part of a policy to foster local filmmaking. I think there is still the feeling that what they are doing is a kind of assistance to the arts, not a part of a policy to establish a viable film industry.

But I think you could argue that the \$500,000 they have put into the industry in the first year of the NZFC has churned out more dollars than the multi-million dollar television establishment. And it is dollars that has reached exhibitors, most people overseas than any of the television or Film Unit programs have.

my career before it is too late.

You want to reach parity and then lobbying, talking and blissing away when you could put the same amount of effort into writing, producing or directing a film.

In which case, do you think this is an area where the NZFC is having less active than it should be?

They have had their problems getting established but I think now they do need to start fighting for an industry, which as yet isn't there. It appears to be there, but it isn't.

There are still too many opportunities for overseas-tempting people to leave the country. Certainly, as questions like the purchase price paid by television for feature films, the NZFC should start moving very strongly. They should be representing film producers in this instance, because film producers aren't getting anywhere at all.

They have a laboratory, which is better than any in Australia in terms of equipment, but we are all terrified to put our movies through it because they might get destroyed.

I think a semi-commercially-minded operator, who could move in and take over the Film Unit, could attract productions from other parts of the world. And then if the Government offered tax incentives — either like the Irish Studios Co — you could have all sorts of feature films from all over the world there. I think David Lane was, and still is, interested in coming over and putting a production through.

And we could be making and post-producing a lot of Australian films there. Maybe that's an area where the two countries could successfully get together. We would surely offer a facility that Australia doesn't have. But certainly no one is going to come in

Commercials

In Australia, the commercials sector of the industry is also a major source of employment for technicians, creative personnel and actors. Is that the case in New Zealand?

Yes. Without commercials I think the NZFC would close down, because it is in that part of the industry that we are training the technicians who service feature films.

Is it a big industry?

It is quite big. And the interesting thing is because there is so little activity in other areas, a lot of enthusiasm goes into making television commercials. In fact, our commercials are among the best in the world. We are picking up more

awards than anyone else at the moment.

It seems extraordinary that such a small industry is producing some of the best work in the field.

I don't know why, but we do have a lot of audacious, talented creative people here. And in the world of advertising, they are given free reign. They are given their head to do whatever they like to do. And maybe if the film industry and the television industry operated in the same way, you would see much more creative work coming out of the country.

But I also think that another reason the commercial sector in New Zealand is so strong, is in fact the lack of a feature film industry. In Australia, the flow of talent — particularly directors — from the commercials sector into the feature film area has definitely affected the standard of the commercial.

Commercial directors have been making quite an impact in the feature film area recently. Alan Parker and Ridley Scott are two examples that come to mind. Why do you think commercials directors more so easily, and effectively, enter feature films?

I think it is the intensity of the commercial work. Every day you are working to feature film standards, and what you are shooting three days of the week, every week of the year, you are in fact, over a period of years, doing more actual filming of a very high quality than you would be ever doing over a lifetime.

I also think that some of the tricks of the trade, and some of the things that you are called upon to do, give you a very good technical background.

As I understand it, local advertising agencies are first to engage foreign commercials. Do you object to that?

I have never been in favour of protectionism of any kind. I guess

you would say that because most countries have protection that New Zealand should too, but I am not prepared to fight for it. I don't want to see any halt in the free exchange of personnel, services and facilities. Into infinity enough. Most New Zealand agencies want to make New Zealand commercials. Most of the commercials that appear on our screen are made here and when the odd American one pops up, people generally don't like it.

Distribution and Exhibition

Another area of the industry which has come in for some criticism recently is the distribution and exhibition sector. In fact several producers have undertaken the distribution of their own films rather than let them go through the chains.

You mention monopoly issues in the head. The issue controlled from outside New Zealand. There is a bit more in the respect to domestic exhibitors and I think there is a good chance it will come about.

What effect will that have?

There will be more alternative outlets and therefore more competition. And that's what the New Zealand industry needs — some good old competition from enterprise and a reduction in the number of monopolies — Government and private.

Writers

A number of recent New Zealand feature films have been written and directed — and in several instances produced — by the same person. In Australia, attempts — particularly by government funding bodies — have been made to separate these functions and encourage greater contributions from writers. Do you

think the doubling up of functions is dangerous in a young industry?

Yes. I think the writer/producer is a big problem in our part of the world. Too often films are made under the guise of being an auteur film, when in fact they shouldn't. It's not necessarily the writers' problem either, it is an industry problem. But writers, particularly novellas — and we have some tremendously good novellas in New Zealand — have no experience in films. In fact there is a lot of confusion about film writers since they think they are writers of radio plays, stories that they write before drinks, and some even believe they are novelists. They are a combination of all those things. Most importantly, a film writer is usually just a director.

The wonderful thing about making an American script is that as you read it the film unfolds, and every basic detail of the theme is described. I once talked to Alan Parker about *Midnight Express* and he told me the wonderful thing about having an American script was to work on *Midnight Express* was that when he read the first draft, he read the film.

He read the first 10 pages and I had a little bit of dialogue. It was a vivid description, because the writer understood the medium completely. He understood directing, photography, lighting, editing — everything. And all the director had to do was go out and improve on what had been written and give it a lot of pacing.

I believe very strongly, as the writer's role but I think one of the problems is that a scriptwriter is someone who is so often asked to just put words to a novel and have people talk. I find that the first job I do when working with a writer is to go through and weed out all the dialogue and put it back into pictures and narrative.

So often writers want to describe what is happening with dialogue instead of in filmic terms. And it is not the inexperienced writer's fault but where do they learn? How do

they become a writer first, and a filmmaker second?

In that respect, the production of drama for television would provide New Zealand writers with the opportunity to gain this sort of experience.

Probably, but I am not sure because television writing doesn't always solve the problem. And television writers often get very bad habits, because television is a dialogue medium.

I tend to look to novelists for tomorrow's film writers — provided they are prepared to put the lance into learning the art. I think there is more connection between a novel and a film, than between a play and a film. In fact I think there is more connection between an open and a film than a play, or a television series and a film.

One initiative the Australian Film Commission has taken is to help local writers gain experience in its long established scriptwriters and producers in Australia. Do you think this is the sort of thing the NZFC should be doing, or do you believe it is a natural evolution?

I think you have to put a stick of dynamite under education occasionally. I don't think there is any harm in that.

One of our problems in New Zealand is that writers and producers are fresh, untrained. The sort of money that is being offered for a feature film script is not nearly enough to attract a person to spend at least a year writing, which is what a film really needs.

Is that why it has taken so long to get your next film project off the ground?

It probably is. *Solo* was a desperate undertaking in the sense that I had to do something and get it on the screen. I wrote the script with Murray Sanderson in four weeks. And the problem of the film was reduced by this.

It is in no sense a script where there I have been trying to take a part in writing myself, as going only someone who can help me. I have contacted a lot of people. What I am now looking for is people that are motivated to someone else. And in that sense I am not in such a desperate rush. I cannot do an American film, and I have buried down in Australia. Now both of which were ready to go. The Australian film starts shooting every month on a budget of more than \$1 million but I can't do that here.

Are you in a position to talk about your latest project at this stage?

Only to say that it is a horror film called *Sticky Fingers* and will go into production some time next year. *



Solo (top two) and *Sticky Fingers* (bottom right) are recent work.

Left: Tony Williams. Right: Murray Sanderson. Below: Tony Williams.

NEW ZEALAND PRODUCTION SURVEY

FEATURES

Key price
Genre
Run time
An impact
Director
Cast
Notes

PRE-PRODUCTION

THE LAST LAST HOME

Producers ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
Screenplay ... **Paul Hill**
Script ... **Paul Hill**
Notes ... **Paul Hill**

REARWARD

Producers ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
Screenplay ... **Paul Hill**
Script ... **Paul Hill**
Notes ... **Paul Hill**

THE SHOOTING

Post company ... **Stewart Phipps**
Producers ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
Screenplay ... **Paul Hill**
Script ... **Paul Hill**
Notes ... **Paul Hill**

SMASH POLICE

Producers ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
Screenplay ... **Paul Hill**
Script ... **Paul Hill**
Notes ... **Paul Hill**

IN PRODUCTION

RACE FOR THE YANKEE EXPRESS

Producers ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
Screenplay ... **Paul Hill**
Script ... **Paul Hill**
Notes ... **Paul Hill**

POST-PRODUCTION

PICTURES

Post company ... **Stewart Phipps**
Producers ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
Screenplay ... **Paul Hill**
Script ... **Paul Hill**
Notes ... **Paul Hill**

IN RELEASE

BEYOND REASONABLE DOUBT

Post company ... **Stewart Phipps**
Producers ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
Screenplay ... **Paul Hill**
Script ... **Paul Hill**
Notes ... **Paul Hill**

SHORTS

BLACK HEARTED RABBIT

Post company ... **Stewart Phipps**
Producers ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
Screenplay ... **Paul Hill**
Script ... **Paul Hill**
Notes ... **Paul Hill**

Genre ... **Paul Hill**
Run time ... **Paul Hill**
An impact ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
Cast ... **Paul Hill**
Notes ... **Paul Hill**

THE OTHER NEW ZEALAND

Producers ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
Screenplay ... **Paul Hill**
Script ... **Paul Hill**
Notes ... **Paul Hill**

VIDEO

Post company ... **Stewart Phipps**
Producers ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
Screenplay ... **Paul Hill**
Script ... **Paul Hill**
Notes ... **Paul Hill**

LYNDIA BURTON INCIDENT

Post company ... **Stewart Phipps**
Producers ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
Screenplay ... **Paul Hill**
Script ... **Paul Hill**
Notes ... **Paul Hill**

REVIEWS

Post company ... **Stewart Phipps**
Producers ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
Screenplay ... **Paul Hill**
Script ... **Paul Hill**
Notes ... **Paul Hill**

THE NEW GUILD

Producers ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
Screenplay ... **Paul Hill**
Script ... **Paul Hill**
Notes ... **Paul Hill**

REVIEWS

Post company ... **Stewart Phipps**
Producers ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
Screenplay ... **Paul Hill**
Script ... **Paul Hill**
Notes ... **Paul Hill**

VIDEOS

Post company ... **Stewart Phipps**
Producers ... **Paul Hill**
Director ... **Paul Hill**
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one could dismiss a worry for this reason alone. If the film does no more than present a true picture of the lives and mental states of one group of people, it is easily identified because they observe their existence through their appearance. A novel talent remains as if the trap they are caught in—a trap that is not always of their own making but one that society takes care for them. As Sam says in the film: "We are with the wrong side because nobody else will associate with us, and nobody else will associate with us because we are with the wrong side."

The film, however, is more than just the developmental progression of a single character. Don McManus has succeeded with the writing and has managed to get good performance from all his actors. Indeed, the film would have been difficult to sustain as a single performance alone.

To a large extent, the fact that the film manages to sustain interest must also be attributed to the skill with which the narrative structure is handled. To evaluate this aspect of the film would lead to further complex discussion. The overall design of the film is broken up: the sequences themselves are fragmented, and the component scenes are scattered as if at random through the film.

There are also a couple of well-handled examples of the omniscient shot. The film sometimes appears to be a mere collection of "Monty" style *scènes à faire*.

The scrambling of the narrative in first-person scenes compresses. The film makers play with this technique to look at a number of things. The reference quickly comes to be as a view from above, but as first a taken some of the time to recognize there from some to some. However, sometimes changes of appearance and qualitative changes in relationships are not presented in a linear and progressive development.

This is an attractive quality in the film because it allows moments of the story, and recognition to be built into the structure. Taken together, these devices all work to distance the viewer from the characters and scenes. The audience is constantly forced to reconstruct the logic sequence of the film as it goes along.



Tracy Mays, winner of the 1980 Best Actress Award, as Sam in Don McManus's *Hard Knocks*

The ideological implications of this technique would be fascinating to investigate, given the subject matter of the film. Questions of point of view would also be interesting to consider. Apart from the direct filmic shots that are small (we need only remember Alan Smithee's *Providence*), it seems that there is not a great deal of difference between a film with a straight narrative structure in which the scenes are finally put down the same kind of story from which the material and the technique of cutting a film so that past and present are apparently made to look at each other face to face, as in this film.

The surface scrambling of the narrative suggests an intriguing but uncertain perhaps there is a deep level

where the structure remains essentially linear. This can be illustrated by a sequential development in Sam from the short hair style through a phase during which her mother moves to the far-off province of the color man in her hair and finally to the color loss of the girl who has a choice between a number of different identities, though perhaps unable to make up her mind.

There is also a progression in her relationship with men. From March (John Amos) who is a little more than an understanding father figure in a loose, gentle manner, moving to Frank (Hilton Boone), a more complex figure who is on the wrong side of society and finally to the complex player who represents a much more complex response to the world

(significantly, it is in his company that Sam experiences some of her most complicated scenarios).

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, there is a real progression in the events which lead Sam step by step to the dilemma she has to face at the end. The construction of the film works in a complex way and depends on more than the linear development by the viewer that the fragmented scenes belong to a linear narrative which can be reconstructed by putting it in its proper sequence.

The editing of the film will obviously be a function of the way the material is handled. The fragments, in fact, are strung together with great skill. Sometimes one is given almost only to flashback and then abandoned to return



Sam and Marilyn Gabor (above) are apprehended by the police (Max Collins and Bill Hunter) *Hard Knocks*

Book Reviews



Alex Korda on his return to Europe in 1939



Melba Osborn, the first Lady Korda

Charmed Lives

Alexis Lurie, 1992
Michael Korda

Bruce McFarlane

Alexander Korda married Melba Osborn "Not content with the angle shepherding, he went on to establish the British film industry. Well, the corner landed only long enough for Melba to be heavily Lady Korda, and the British film industry if it may be judged, has never been securely established."

When an untold document was in the 1970s as a respect for serious scholarship can scarcely be had at all. Alex Korda seems to have been philosophically wrong-headed about British films as long ago as the 1930s, with his "babe" in the international film — a big historical drama about famous personalities or events?

With little, in any case, at least, here been the death of the British cinema, one or take low-off-the-scenes like Lawrence of Arabia pushing out the smaller truly indigenous products (the early Carol Reed or Ealing comedies) which gave the industry whatever reputation it once had.

Korda had no interest or faith in film of this kind, even in the form of criticism like *The Shadow Box*. The *Fallen Idol* produced by London Films, his own company. He seemed more so about the way he put film, representation, in part from the early output of *The Private Life of Henry VIII* was towards such internationally-minded clunkers as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Anna Karenina* (Mind you, his projected war and peace with Melba in Russia might have been a different story, though some would no doubt add "different from Tolstoy's").

His opinion, Michael Korda has written mostly the paper about "the fabulous world of the Korda brothers" and though the account is lively and sometimes in a way that for such writers have been many may feel that he tells them both more and less than they ever wanted to know about the Kordas. More that is about where Alex has his clothes made for costume; less about the films themselves.

(Zoltan Korda's excellent version of the Penzance episode. *The Ambassador Affair* doesn't even rate a passing mention.)

However, I don't want to write too cynical a note. The book, though overlong, is pleasantly well-written, allowing the benefits of education in a way that should make Chaucer's *Canterbury* consider right closer of the plots to continue her writing career.

Michael Korda is sometimes far, even more, and sometimes witty, in when he tells us that Alex, Alex's dead wife, "had learned — and put into practice — the universal advice of the Duchess of Windsor: 'A woman can never be too thin or too rich'." Further, he is so scrupulous about his education that a direct ship, like referring to Sam Goldwyn's wife (a woman of charm and taste despite her disreputable marriage) as Florence instead of France, is a crime.

Though the book is subtitled "A Family Romance" and though the dualistic aspects of the Korda brothers, *Charmed Lives* is, necessarily, perhaps inevitable. Alex's story. Visiting the author's father goes up frequently but without our having much more about

him than that he was the most Bohemian of the brothers and perhaps the most suitably good-natured. His career is a set deeper for his brother's films is described, but not dark again, not in his somewhat valiant marriage to the author's mother, the actress Gertrude Margrave.

His relationship with his second wife, Lella, by whom he had several children in her middle age, is perhaps the point most reduced in the book, and the author's allusion for his father, notwithstanding, is hardly childhood and teenage love worship for his uncle Alex is recorded with touching understatement.

Zoltan, the middle brother, seems to have suffered from a sense of competition with Alex. Despite the phenomena of the brothers, and it is a pleasant that exceeds that of any other relationship in the book, Zoltan has himself off more consistently from the Korda dynasty than the others. In fact, the book drops his career which deserves more than the passing reference that Michael Korda makes in *The Thief of Baghdad*, *Seven and Seven the Red and Country*, *Macomber* and *A Woman's Vengeance* (based on Aldous Huxley's *Greenwich* book) are usually films of more than passing interest.

On a personal level, for a book which makes a good deal of marriage and matrimony, Zoltan's wife Joan is the least substantial figure in the book; given not so much as a surname. His films — and his marriage — appear to have been more consistently successful than Alex's and it is frustrating to be told so little about them. There was much less contact and support between Michael Korda and his wife Joan, and this perhaps accounts for the former's comparative neglect.

It is Alex, undoubtedly, who was the chief formative influence on Michael's life and one may wonder, is it not just a matter of feeling at the luxury of being Sir Alexander Korda's nephew (and he is a home about this — and about the debt he paid from his connection with *Acute Mark*) Alex had "promised to an extraordinary degree" was "by far the most tolerant and critical of the brothers" and had to enduring "passion for war" which was his strength and his undoing as a director.

Only when Michael, in 1936, during various Europe having medical supplies



Alex and Vivian Leigh on the set of *Anna Karenina*

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Addendum

Flow marks



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	Infrequent	Frequent	Low	Medium	High	Justified	Questionable
1. Good	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2. Good	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3. Good	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
4. Good	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

JUNE 1982

FOR GENERAL EXHIBITION 'B'

FILMS REGISTERED WITHOUT ELIMINATIONS

Title	Producer	Country	Submission Length (in)	Approval	Reason for Decision
1. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
2. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
3. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
4. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
5. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
6. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
7. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
8. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
9. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
10. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved

NOT RECOMMENDED

FOR CHILDREN 'A'

FILMS REGISTERED WITHOUT ELIMINATIONS

Title	Producer	Country	Submission Length (in)	Approval	Reason for Decision
1. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
2. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
3. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
4. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
5. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
6. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
7. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
8. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
9. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
10. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved

FOR MATURE AUDIENCES 'M'

FILMS REGISTERED WITHOUT ELIMINATIONS

Title	Producer	Country	Submission Length (in)	Approval	Reason for Decision
1. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
2. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
3. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
4. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
5. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
6. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
7. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
8. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
9. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
10. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved

FOR RESTRICTED EXHIBITION 'R'

FILMS REGISTERED WITHOUT ELIMINATIONS

Title	Producer	Country	Submission Length (in)	Approval	Reason for Decision
1. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
2. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
3. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
4. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
5. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
6. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
7. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
8. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
9. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
10. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved

FOR RESTRICTED EXHIBITION 'R'

FILMS REGISTERED WITH ELIMINATIONS

Title	Producer	Country	Submission Length (in)	Approval	Reason for Decision
1. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
2. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
3. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
4. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
5. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
6. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
7. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
8. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
9. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
10. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved

FOR RESTRICTED EXHIBITION 'R'

FILMS REGISTERED WITH ELIMINATIONS

Title	Producer	Country	Submission Length (in)	Approval	Reason for Decision
1. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
2. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
3. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
4. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
5. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
6. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
7. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
8. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
9. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved
10. <i>Amos & Andy</i>	Amos & Andy	USA	1:00:00	Approved	Approved

FILM BOARD OF REVIEW

NOT

Not to be shown as a commercial film. Not to be shown as a commercial film. Not to be shown as a commercial film.

Continued on P.397

Bob Kilgus

Continued from P. 319

project had been cancelled.

Eventually, they filmed the first draft after David Tennant had printed it in *Sutton's* bureau, and it had slowly dawned on *Sutton* that a script which he had laughed at, and which had got violent fading might be worth making after all.

I think the film's history is disorienting, with the emphasis on people who don't need qualifications being in charge. It is almost disgusting what happens to James Oliver's commentators and people like that, who disappear momentously because they don't have proven abilities in any field. It is also so three classes (working-class) people.

You see the problem on something like *Party Fun*, whose script was hailed by the producer as a great work of world art, yet whose realization on screen doesn't come half way up to *Shogun*, and is arguably garish, unfunny, and unexciting.

It is not fair that I should be saddled with bad results merely because the wrong kinds of minds are drawn inordinately by their incoherence to the highest childhood youth and young adulthood into the film business.

So, you don't like the finished film...

I think it will make a lot of money. It has a lot of energy — it is a sort of pre-pubescent *Greece* — and as visual art is nothing less than amazing. It's not a world I have inhabited or seen from afar, but a bit of even kind of fantasy.

All the performances are dreadful, the conspicuous exception being *Ben Newman's* it's also over-the-top, but what can I say? Terry Jackson's kid looks it.

Future Plans

What scripts are you working on now?

I recently completed a screen play for Ben Newman and Christine Kennedy called *The Road to Gondium* in which they are on a lifetime day when *Gondium* is bombed. They then take a walk, hidden at a 30-year, back to the Prime Minister of Australia. They hatch-like path in Gondium, towards their home-town of Gondium.

Kennedy and Newman read the script and found it silly, and out of keeping with their present, holy suburban image. So that is not happening. I have finished a script about radio actors in the 1940s, which is like *Newman*, but funny, and not



"It is not fair that I should be saddled with bad results merely because the wrong kinds of minds are drawn inordinately by their incoherence throughout childhood, youth and young adulthood into the film business."

astounding and intense. There is a mystery set in *Surfers Paradise*, which is a kind of Australian version of *Raymond Chandler*. There is a film about a boy and the *James Armit*, which was the first Melbourne Cup after being worked by a scripter all the way from *Newman*, and then all the way back.

There is a film in the package about *homosexuals* in *King's Cross*, and one set in the Los Angeles of *Philip Street* about a character vaguely like *Clive East* defending a character vaguely like *Arthur Cohen*.

I have talked to the *Signpost* organization about a road film, about two companionship, played by *Olivia Newton-John* and *Nichelle Fawcett*, going north to an audience for a coherent version of *Signpost* in *Surfers Paradise*.

There is a film in the manner of *Casablanca* which I have been trying to do for about 18 months, without much success. Like most film projects, it is an accident the events of November 11, 1973, though it is nothing more than a love story set in *Casablanca*, with these events being held. It was to be called *These Reminders* and with an intention to first, which goes, "These reminders. My Lord I find of you which I have longed to add to *Shakespeare* To Sir John Kerr." It was worried that no funding body would want it, which is a pity.

I am also doing a mini-series with *James Buchanan* about *Ben Miles*. It will have six one-hour half hour episodes and will involve an investigation, with *Facebook* and witnesses. We have acquired the rights to his diaries, which are some of the best writing of the 20th Century. It is as good as *Gogol*.

I am writing a play for a season at the *Stratford Theatre* at the end of the year. It is called *My Good Year* and is about those bad weeks last Christmas when *Tim Wook*

dying Afghanistan was being bombed war was imminent and *hundreds* were being taken to *Soviet*. It is set at *Wales Beach* and involves a character like *Les Murray* and other recognizable people. *Four West* has not done. The play is set at *Wales Beach* and is an attempt at proving that plays like *Martelle Towers* and a *Handful of Pennies* can be made into respectable.

I am also bringing about a book on my collected works, called *Kilgus Right and Wrong*, and I am going to do a novel about *Australian* short stories.

What is the project you are doing with David Tennant?

His working title is *Bob Kilgus's Tale of Woe* (and in the *Northman* kid. It's fairly much in the style of *Woody Allen* and is about my life — about growing up in a real religion, with emphasis on the end of the world.

What do you have to add to play yourself?

Well, I am available, but I think he should be a skinny young actor who looks like the young *Peter Finch* called *Robert Minter*, or a boy called *John Howard* who was in *Birmingham* and *Gary's Story*. He is like a young *Tim Llewellyn-Jones* and plays serious young *scholarships* better than anybody I have seen.

How do you manage to do so many scripts?

By writing every day, being out of town and being determined to not eating, drinking and socializing, but *gluttonous* in *sex*. This has led to many painful situations that I have, have given me a working substitute for *sex* which is *work*. Also I find that if you start with a good idea it doesn't take long to write a good screenplay, if you start with a bad idea it could take weeks.

Most Australian writers and producers start with really bad ideas — like the *Melbourn's* *Dumb*, the really over-the-top, ideological ones like *Chris Kavanagh* read *The Jaws*, *Factor*, and *Historical* and *down* like *The Battle of Broken Hill* and *Cathy's Child*, of which the audience did only know the ending.

It is better, in my experience, to start like a journalist, with a general sense of life that you can turn around — at least, local politics, *drunken* *you-draw* the *age* track, in whatever. And out of the best true stories that people tell you, weave a story line.

Also the problem is not managing the energy to write there, but *keeping* the energy to do the next thing, which is to *find* *them* around — and the *passion* to write long essays with the *passion* you have to deal with. I live in hope. *

Ron Ceezey

Continued from P. 351

How many images did the Russians generate simultaneously?

For the main stadium they had three separate productions: one on the running track, one on one of the throwing events, and one on jumping events. They had three studios down in *Gondium*, where there were three operators set in use at the same time. So there were six in two studios alone.

Probably, they had up to 25 different areas to which you could have access.

Did all these images automatically come through your set-up, or did you have to look at screens?

We gave indications of what we might want before we left, but the specific bookings would be 24 hours in advance. It was possible, however, to get pictures at very short notice. To get a contemporary picture took a little extra time.

One interesting aspect was your use of different cameras men in the studio. Why was that?

There were certain days when you were specifically required for the events they were best suited for, so we used them in the studio.

When we made the decision to go to Moscow, we had to revise our budget. This meant we didn't have as many commentators as we wanted, and the guys had to double up on various occasions.

What was your feeling about the standard of commentary?

I think everybody did very well. We had very few complaints from the public about the standard of commentary. We had one or two from opposition media, however.

You seemed to be at your happiest when you were at the boxing ring...

Oh, I wouldn't say that. I was at my happiest at the closing ceremony, for obvious reasons.

Again, from where, at one time, did you have control over the way it was covered?

No, but that is standard practice at the Olympic Games. The host nation is required to create by the IOC, what is called an "institutional picture." At the start of the 100 metres, for example, it is required to put the camera for a certain number of seconds on each competitor.

The reason there are now three *Canadian* news programmes out of the main stadium, instead of one, is the criterion in the past. The director would go to the back stage just at the shot pattern from another

Lori Windst

Continued from P. 130

To understand the Award and what it means, you have to understand the way things used to operate before, which was on the basis of such informal as the having a separate industrial agreement with the union. There were two components: work conditions — when would breaks should happen, rates of pay, etc. — and the rights associated with the film. Each producer, before starting production, would sit at his problems and we would tailor an agreement around a specific situation.

In some extent, producers were a bit fearful about this — not that we took advantage of them, but they felt vulnerable in terms of being lapped-logged over. Producers also felt vulnerable in that they couldn't plan 12 or 15 months in advance. They wanted to know what our requirements would be at that time, so that they wouldn't be caught short-footed. Not unreasonable propositions, either of them.

We then started discussions and reached substantial agreement. But the producers wanted to hurry things along, and scheduled as a lot of events. We had more negotiations — most of these took place around the questions of rights, as distinct from conditions — and finally the Award was incorporated in November 1979.

I am sure you would have heard accusations of bad faith — that we weren't playing by the rules, and that we had no months of the Award being passed we were already playing off-burgers with it. I don't think that's quite true. The Award really resolved the conflicts and differences of the past, by the time of its incorporation, the rules had changed. We are accused of bad faith because we had to respond to what we saw as a crisis. All I can say is, that for a crisis to have arisen within the first six months of the Award, the preparatory planning must have been made well before the Award was completed. And it was never raised with us.

It has been suggested that during the formulation of the Award, some producers felt they were being a little blunty to import whatever they liked, provided they paid the penalties. Was that possibility ever discussed?

Yes, but not in an overt way. It was discussed on the grounds of an analogy of don't interfere. But what was made very clear throughout the discussion was that the question of international distinction and merit was never a negotiable point.

The Award came in November 1979 for 12 months. Will it then be renegotiated?

No, that is not the way awards



British director David Hemmings on location in Australia for *The Servant*. The producer is Antony Ginnane.

work. What happens is that one side serves a log of time, and you negotiate a conclusion. What you are saying is each other is, "Let's have a truce for a certain period of time." The award here is 12 months, but we agreed to make it 18 months. At the end of those 18 months, the truce is over, and if one side wants to change something, that's well and good. But if both parties are happy, you can let it go.

It has been alleged that your new policy constrains the Award...

I don't think so. I can't see where it does. We are merely looking towards a realistic interpretation of the provisions in the Award, which says that artists have to be of international distinction and merit. We are looking for the genuine article.

The Award is between Equity and the Film and Television Production Association of Australia. What happens if a producer is not a member of the FTAAP?

He either becomes a member or gives an undertaking that he will be bound by the Award. If there are some peculiarities on a particular film, a separate industrial agreement can be negotiated. I can't think of any, but one possibility is an animated film which involves only voice-over people.

What is the position of overseas producers wishing to make a film in Australia?

They would be looked at on a case-by-case basis. If you are looking at an American production company into Australia, we are bound by the statute of the International Federation of Actors. Whatever the terms are between the two countries involved, the higher terms should operate. Certainly, if an American producer should come to this country and want to produce something, we would ask the Screen Actors Guild rates and conditions apply.

As for the rest of it, we would have to know what kind of production we were looking at. There

is not much experience of that in this country, and the nearest thing is a couple of television-type producers, like the McDonalds. And that here. We are not really experienced in dealing with American producers.

If an overseas producer arranges a co-production, with only minimal Australian government involvement, would he come under the new policy?

If the producer is not Australian, there would be the question of whether he is the holder of the copyright and so on. But we wouldn't think the Australian funding bodies would go into partnership with overseas corporations in terms of film production. That role is to develop an Australian film industry, using the resources of Australians in that situation. So, I don't know what kind of examples you are thinking of.

It is conceivable that a film such as *"The Blue Lagoon"* could be made here, with some government involvement...

Is it?

Isn't it?

Well, let's look at *The Servant*, which is an example par excellence of modified working on behalf of a government corporation. Here you have SAFC money in a film that has a foreign writer, a foreign director and foreign actors. You have substantial foreign creative control in that film.

But the producer, an Australian, legally retains all the creative control, in Australia...

Words fail me when talking about that producer. I know the contracts you are talking about. That was one of the first items of contention.

The first dispute that arose over the Award was over *The Servant* with Tony Ginnane wanting to import four overseas actors. It failed, he took us to court. Let me tell

you that not only did he have a hard job convincing us that he had total creative control, he also found some extraordinary difficulty convincing the judge. I guess, that has to be bullish. Otherwise he would be arguing that the director has no creative control. Well, I would like to have the director's viewpoint about that one.

One point to come out of *"The Servant"* case was the question of completion guarantees. If it is becoming increasingly difficult to get completion guarantees within Australia, what effect will this have on the Award?

The Award provides for the categorization of the film A, which is all-Australian, B, which is mostly Australian but the actors, and C, which has some personnel who are overseas people. We felt one could have made the classification on where the money came from. The producers disagreed and proposed an alternative, which was source credits. If the sittings are real, they argued, these will show up on the screen credits.

One of the propositions was the question of completion guarantees. At the time, there were no overseas companies involved in providing completion guarantees, and even when a number of them came from government funding bodies. The producers suggested that if there is an Australian completion guarantee, one can be pretty certain it is an Australian production. If it is an overseas completion guarantee, it must have the assistance of some foreign partners.

We finally agreed to the proposition but within a couple of months of the Award being finalized, Film Financiers Ltd (U.K.) came on the scene. Two British guys came out and we had a yarn. Our interest was whether they wanted any creative control over a film, because if they did, bung! They said they wanted to try on the Australian film industry on a film-by-film basis before they got a too deep. We wanted to meet them in a one-off basis, as well.

At the same time, we were getting a lot of pressure from the government funding bodies, which were trying to get out of that average guarantee situation, so that they would have more power to invest in films. So, Film Financiers seemed to us as an attractive proposition.

We are not satisfied, however, that there is a question of what is, by using Film Financiers, or a similar type of company, there may be a tendency to inflate the budgets to maximize their risk. Now, that has to be thought about. If it turns out to be a problem, then I think the industry as a whole needs to ask whether it should be encouraged, or should it be in the scheme where the government corporations look after that end of things. *Continued on P. 130*

Cruising

Continued from P. 34A

Cruising's greatest insight and its least may be this: gay, lesbian, bisexual persons that they are a challenge to the social/cultural norms and become accordingly radicalized. Instead, they stick themselves up in a ghetto in which security is kept to relegate them and remove the brutal and brainwashing values of that society. This seems to me a provocation that the gay community should seriously debate rather than merely shrug.

The web of associations and later which disavows and homogenizes together around the theme of power are considered in the same where the police, during their investigations of a suspected killer, struggle for a huge Negro dragqueen to suddenly burst into the room and stop the suspect (Paul Barnes) around.

Feldman presents the scene with no narrative explanation before or after, with the result that some have deemed it to be a particularly absurd and nonsensical part of the film. But I would argue that its symbolic resonances are very rich.

The Negro, on the one hand, embodies the energies repressed by white society that away in ghettos like the gays. This points to a more general sexual repression, not just a sexual one. Equally, the Negro stands for the super-phallic hyper-male. And finally, wearing a cowboy hat, he signifies homosexuality itself, or the kind of homosexuality which identifies with the same of phallicistic power.

But all this energy is used by the police for their own ends, transformed into a tool of social control which denies fact and promotes alienation. To demonstrate this system of domination would mean denigrating all the cultural meanings and transformations upon which it depends.

Within the patriarchal structure depicted in the film, law proceeds from the Father, and the film is full of sexual or symbolic fathers. Barnes has fathered as well as his own father to his up to: Richards' psychosis stems from his relationship with his father. When the fabric of the social order begins to crumble, the father's command is to eliminate whatever threatens it. Richards' rage (remember) his father telling him "You know what you have to do." In fact, the film makes it clear that Richards is literally his himself when he kills — he speaks with his father's voice and is destroyed by the father's aggressive drive.⁵

Within this context the role of Feldman is par-

Richard Gere and Anthony Quinn in *Cruising*

ticularly complex. One might imagine him to be the paternalistic father of the film, sending out his "son" to clean up the sordid gay world. This is hardly the case. Not only can one sense a certain sympathy or even empathy as his part towards just incident, for example, in the case of one of the harassed characters from the opening scene comes to him for (apparently) more importantly, Feldman possesses none of the attributes of phallic power. Quite the contrary, he is a young, handsome Hollywood actor of a certain class, and while Barnes and Richards play stereotypes, "masculine" sports (body-building, football), he can also play chess and pool, and plays them on his own.

Feldman is indeed another voice of the system — the State system and the patriarchal system — he himself is subject to a "father," his superior, who orders that the investigation be speeded up and the case closed for the sake of political gain. This demand prompts the brutal treatment of the suspect, which is essentially an attempt to elicit a confession of guilt, even if it is not true.

Throughout the film, Feldman is the one who knows about the victimization of gays by police, but can do nothing — how could a police chief be seen to support what is deemed socially aberrant? Symbolically, Feldman has become castrated because he is a policeman in a system which drains him of any genuine humanity or sensibility. He is merely a position, a function, he tells Barnes, "It's only a job," and detective work is referred to as a "body count."

Aggression does not only run from "normal" society to homosexuals. The film suggests a second nature for his cause. Feldman himself reveals it as a way of taking the heterosexual part of oneself.

The true threat to the film is homosexuality, and all the dissolution of fixed identities that entails. The police are fascinated by homosexuality as much as they actively hate it. Feldman knows everything about the gay scene as if he were a insider: the patrol car gets sucked, and Feldman is seen. Subtly in the last — whether pretending to be gay or actually he is not made clear. But a homosexual impulse is, in fact, represented here to murder. Richards' words to each of his victims as he kills them — "You made me do this" — given to make you must die for wanting and satisfying the desire I must suppress.

Barnes is also, and especially, implicated in this kind of repression and aggression. A scene towards the end, with two vigorously dancing in a bar, is an attempt to affirm his masculinity (his phallus) as well as his heterosexuality. But even as he does this he means the studied hetero wishful which is part of his gay self; his repression is incomplete. Later he is followed out of a gay bar and propositioned — "That huge fat your pants aren't a load!" — a proof of his desire that clearly troubles him.

The breaking of repression occurs when he battles in a close to go to Ted's intimate Gregory, an act whose violence far exceeds immediate provocation. Barnes realizes his identity

problem only when he kills the killer with almost as much violence as the killer's own victims are disposed of.

But all resolutions are thrown into doubt by the final scenes of the film. Richards is arrested, but another homosexual is found dead, and it is Ted Barnes' neighbor in the apartment block. If Gregory is the killer, a tension suggested for the murder — "It lives!" — remains — reflect not to any inherent quality of gay relationships, but for more a defining characteristic of the dominant heterosexual patriarchy: mutual possession between two people, with all its attendant problems and tensions.

If Barnes is a further source of aggression against his own gay impulses, it is clear that this threat also questions everything we have assumed about the relationship between film and Ted.

Earlier in the film, Ted is presented as a "good," normal homosexual, someone who can be tolerated by society, and who in turn respects it. Visually, he is never connected with the leather lifestyle, and his physical contact with Barnes attests no further that a good-buddy job on the shoulder that, making back from that scene. Ted's remarks that he is "confused," and understands why people get into the leather set, or Gregory's allusion to a time when Ted associated with "trash," take on a new significance, casting doubt over the apparent innocence or assent of his involvement with Barnes — and thus over Barnes' readiness to his own desires.

Defiance is present in the police search the murder scene, a sign suggesting that aggression can come not from individual "madness" but from the social order itself. Feldman this appears, again implicit in the face of the events and their significance, which he fully realizes.

Feldman dissolves from Feldman looking at the corpse to a shot of a man seen from the back, entering a gay bar, of almost exact duplication of the first shot of the killer, merely shown. This character is not meant to be identified. He stands for any or all of the film's possible killers.

The final scene between Barnes and Nancy is remarkably ambiguous, inviting two equally contradictory readings. Barnes turns his gaze to the camera as, off-screen, his girlfriend approaches — meaning the killer's gaze. What is Barnes' silent address to the camera meant to tell us that he is about to kill her (i.e., a further aggression against both gays and women, as at the film's start)? Is the loss in the final shot about to find her body in the river? Or is it that at last fixed sexual identities have been stripped away, and that the scene celebrates the emergence of a playful, instant desire?

This ambiguity is not a problem. In fact, *Cruising's* greatest strength is that it can only be read if one is ready to question one's own self-definitions — as a film viewer, and as a subject within that society. *

The dark, hot world of *Cruising*Feldman and a police psychologist examine the X-ray of a murdered man. *Cruising*

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the film 'The Exorcist'
by John G. and



Number 21
May-June 1979

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Number 22
July-August 1979

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Number 23
September-October
1979

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Number 24
December 1979 -
January 1980

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Number 25
February-March 1980

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